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THOUGHTS ON THE LIFE OF
THE CHRISTIAN

BY

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"Because I live, ye shall live also." — ST. JOHN xiv. 19

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PREFACE

AS a man nears the term of life, the question may properly arise whether experience has yielded him results which he should not carry away with him when he dies. It is a question of doubtful answer; for not only are personal inward experiences seldom — almost never — fit subject for communication to others, but even the practical results of such experience, realized in thought and conclusions, may have little value outside the individual, however decisive their influence upon himself. Self deception in such a matter is easy; the sense of proportion is readily lost; one may think too highly of his thoughts as well as of himself.

On the other hand, the fortunate provision that a man shall carry away with him no possession external to himself does not hold in the case of that most profitable of all the assets of living, the fixed and certain practical conclusions, the combined outcome of experience and reflection, which command allegiance and influence conduct. These may have value to fellow-combatants in the battle of life, and this can be assured only by committing them to writing. The effort so to do, moreover, is useful to the person himself; and that in two ways. First,

he will be forced generally to recognize that his thoughts and conclusions are fragmentary in character; that they need arrangement and coördination. Even though he already realize the supremacy of some particular one among them, the others need to be correctly grouped around that one, in their due relation to each other. Secondly, thus confronting admitted principles of action will bring home the shortcoming of conduct, in a manner and to a degree calculated to sober forever any undue self-appreciation.

One clear duty of old age, whether as regards personal character or unfulfilled purposes, is to gather up the fragments that remain; to redeem lost time and lost opportunity; to utilize what is left of powers which may have begun to fail, and the remnants of thought or knowledge lying still at loose ends. Such economy, which makes the householder to prosper, is still more needful to the life; as the one exceeds the other in importance. Never is this more urgently true than when the time, always short, has become surely scant.

That which is offered here is literally fragmentary, in origin and in essential characteristics; the purely occasional results, yielded to reflection and to experience in the course of life, noted as they occurred. It was the purpose of the author to emphasize this fact by a title: *Fragments that Remain*; but this was found to have been used already

by another writer. The attempt certainly has been made to weave these disconnected thoughts into a coherent whole, presenting a certain sequence of arrangement; but there is in this nothing of the elaboration which inheres in the word "system." The utmost that has been sought is the predominance of a particular thought, which, by a process resembling that of natural selection, has come to be the centre around which all else groups itself, in relation and subordination.

That thought is that man to-day is susceptible of an enthusiasm for Jesus Christ, resembling, but surpassing, that which has been shown in past times for this or that historical character in many nations; and that this enthusiasm is love, because it is inspired less by His mighty deeds than by the sense of the excellence of His Person, and by realization of personal relation to Him. In this respect His supremacy is so absolute and unapproachable that He alone among the sons of men stands the adequate object of affection; not to this nation or that, not to this epoch or the other, but to universal mankind and to every age. The single motive, for the honor of Christ, — or as He put it for Himself, for the glory of God, — is alone full of light. It unifies all action and solves all perplexities. Nothing new? No; only always new.

An expression has been attributed to Napoleon, that the enthusiasm, which was stirred in his armies

by his presence on a battle field, was still aroused after eighteen centuries by the Name of Jesus Christ, in myriads who had never seen Him; so that for Him too they were ready to die. Whether truly attributed or not, the words are truth; and they are true because He lives now, and His unseen presence is the life of His followers.

There are many who apply to Christian life the test of our Lord's words: He that hath My Commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loves Me. Comparatively, little heed is given to His other saying, which observes the order of true sequence. If a man love Me, he *will* keep My Commandments. Life is impoverished by the conception which puts work first, love second; for this reverses the order of cause and effect. The riches of Christ are unsearchable; but chief among them is the gift of love for Himself. It is a gift, not an acquisition.

CONTENTS

THE LIFE OF THE CHRISTIAN

CHAPTER	PAGE
I POWER	I
II LIKENESS	56
III INTERCOURSE	88
IV FULFILMENT	182
V HOPE	248

THE PRACTICAL IN CHRISTIANITY . . .	263
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THE LIFE OF THE CHRISTIAN

The Harvest Within

THE LIFE OF THE CHRISTIAN

CHAPTER I

POWER

THE "Life of the Christian" and "The Christian Life" may seem at first sight to be interchangeable expressions; but they are not. They are indeed closely related, as cause to effect. Yet the distinction is real; and it is not without purpose that *The Life of the Christian* has been chosen to designate the leading theme of this present writing.

The Christian Life signifies more exactly what we call in general the conduct of life, — the acceptance of principles, the establishment therefrom of habits and methods, the daily regulating of times and occupations, the whole issuing in a series of actions, a set course of life, conformed to the words and example of Jesus Christ. An instance of such systematized life, a model held up to us as an illustration, is the "Christian Year," ordered by the Church for the due and proportioned remembrance, and observance, of the chief historical events in the Life of our Lord Jesus Christ; preëminently those set forth in the

Creeds. By this means the Church keeps the characteristic features of that Life, in due order of succession, ever before her members, as the exemplar to which they are to conform their own; this graphic teaching being elucidated and enforced by set prayers and passages from the Word of God, bringing out the full significance of the historical facts. Further, these facts, when confessed by the mouth and embraced by the heart,¹ become effectual in the Life of the Christian. Features in the Life of his Lord, manifesting His power, they are assimilated to, and become powers in, the life of the follower, by his union with Him. Thus it is written, "Your life is hid with Christ in God."² For the Life of the Christian is an interior condition, of which the Christian Life is the outward expression. The interior condition is that of Faith, and thereby of vital union with Jesus Christ,³ through the appointed joints and bands;⁴ a union so complete as to associate, even to identify, us with Him in those historical sequences of His Life which are recited in the Creeds. This union, to use His own simile, is as close and real as that by which the vine-branch shares the root and vigor of the vine.⁵

Lest the nature of this Life of the Christian should be misconceived, it must from the outset be noted, and should be carefully distinguished, that this simile of Christ's does not warrant any pantheistic conception, any idea of loss of personality in a

¹ Romans, x, 8-11. ² Colossians, iii, 3. ³ Galatians, iii, 25-29.

⁴ Colossians, ii, 19. Ephesians, i, 22-23; iv, 16.

⁵ St. John, xv, 1-6.

Divine essence. On the contrary, just because the Life of God is characteristically personal, this Life from Him deriving is personal, increasedly over that which for distinction we call the natural life. The branch does not cease to exist, distinct as a branch, because it draws its life from the vine. Thus we have union with Christ in that new human nature of which His Incarnation is the origin and the abiding source; union with Him in His Life of humiliation and obedience, of which His Birth, and acceptance of un sinful human infirmities, are the visible expression; union with Him in His Sufferings, in His Crucifixion, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension. In such wise are these incidents of His Life realized to those who live in Him, that it can be said of them with exactness, as does St. Paul: crucified with Christ, dead with Christ, buried with Christ, risen with Christ, ascended with Christ.¹ Our Lord's simile embraces implicitly all these explicit amplifications of the Apostle, the life of the branch being the extension of the life of the Vine; contingent always, be it remembered, upon abiding in Him. Whatever of virtue — that is, of power — there was in those deeds of Him Who was God as well as Man abides in measure in His followers also; and this power—the dwelling in Christ and Christ in him—² is the Life of the Christian, his own in present possession, though not his own in origin, in accomplishment, nor in maintenance.

¹ Galatians, ii, 20; vi, 14. Romans, vi, 4-11. 2 Corinthians, v, 14. Romans, vi, 2, 3. Colossians, ii, 20; 9-13; iii, 1. Ephesians, ii, 4-6.

² St. John, vi, 56, 57; xv, 4-6. 1 St. John, ii, 24.

This derivation of life is as actual as is that of natural life from the line of ancestry preceding it; but it differs in that the gift of natural life is mediate, through man though from God, and, once bestowed, is independent of the human medium; whereas the spiritual life, the Life of the Christian, is immediate in its derivation from Christ, who is the Personal giver, and the condition of dependence is perpetual. Severance is death. St. Paul speaks of this condition as being a new creation, a new man,¹ created in Christ Jesus for good works.² Or, as St. Peter and St. James write, God has begotten us anew unto a living hope, not of corruptible seed but of incorruptible, by the Word of God which liveth and abideth, that we should be a kind of first fruits of His creatures.³ All three but echo the saying of the Master, Except a man be born anew, he cannot see the Kingdom of God.⁴ St. Paul again in a striking passage sums up the matter in these words: I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me; and that life which I now live in the flesh, I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, Who loved me and gave Himself up for me.⁵

Here, at the threshold of the Life which is the Christian's, in the word Faith, we meet an impediment over which many stumble, needlessly and even wilfully, groping at noonday as in the night. So it was written beforehand concerning Him and them,

¹ 2 Corinthians, v, 17. Ephesians, ii, 13-16; iv, 20-24. Colossians, iii, 10, 11.

² Ephesians, ii, 10.

³ 1 St. Peter, i, 3, 4, 23. St. James, i, 18.

⁴ St. John, iii, 3.

⁵ Galatians, ii, 20.

I lay in Zion a chief corner stone; and he that believeth on Him shall not be confounded. But unto them which be disobedient, the same stone which to the believing is the head of the corner, becomes the stone of stumbling and the rock of offence.¹ For the subject matter of the Faith is a Person, — Jesus Christ.² Faith is the condition of our union with Him, and through Him with that which He revealed: God the Father, and our true life. Faith is the act by which Man, on his part, lays hold upon the Life which God, on His part, tenders continually to all men.³ Hence, unbelief — towards God — and disobedience — to a revealed law of life — are interchangeable terms, the two sides of the same shield, and the fault common to both is in the will. Let not a violent disclaimer provoke the impatient here to close discussion by the premature assertion that Faith is not a matter of will. Rather let him consider whether his own conception of Faith be not responsible for a misapprehension of far reaching, yes, of decisive, consequence.

For, in considering the Life of the Christian, we must face the facts at once, and perceive that Faith, whereby the Christian lays hold on life, is on the human side an act of the will; and that therefore man is responsible for its presence or absence in himself. There is a Divine side to Faith; but to

¹ Isaiah, xxviii, 16. 1 St. Peter, ii, 6-8. St. Matthew, xxi, 42-44.

² Acts, xvi, 31; xx, 21; xxiv, 24; xxvi, 18. St. John, xiv, 1. Ephesians, i, 15. Colossians, ii, 5.

³ St. John, iii, 17. 1 Timothy, ii, 4; iv, 10. Titus, ii, 11. 2 St. Peter, iii, 9.

that God will not be wanting. The full responsibility therefore rests on the man, nor can he shake it by any disclaimer. It remains, whether he will or not.

Dr. Johnson, as reported by Boswell, has summed up the case with his accustomed shrewdness and point. Speaking of human life in the general, he said, "A man must accept life on the terms upon which it is offered to him." His will must conform to the conditions as he finds them. In the immediate instance he was talking about drinking wine, as pertinent to both himself and his hearer. He had a strong head, but lacked self-control; if he drank at all he was constitutionally liable to excess. He accepted the condition, and took refuge in entire abstinence. "Now, the wine on the table has for me no more attraction than for the dog under the table." Boswell had a weak head; in consequence was not seldom overcome. He did not accept the condition, and the weakness increased upon him to his destruction. It is the same with any bodily trouble. A man of consumptive tendency, of weak heart, or other infirmity, must accept the condition and order his life accordingly. If not, the condition proves too much for him. In either event, his action is one of his will. What is here noted, of certain particular conditions, is evidently true of all the circumstances, external or internal, environment or heredity, which attend upon any calling or personality. It is true also of those physical conditions which we style loosely the "laws" of Nature; for example, gravitation, and the inability of man's life to exist under water. We have to ac-

cept the condition that we cannot safely throw ourselves from a height or into the sea.

It may be presumed that all who are devotionally familiar with the text and spirit of the New Testament, the Christian Code and Charter, will agree that the decisive condition, upon which the gift of the Life of the Christian is offered to men, is summed up in one expression, "We walk by faith, not by sight."¹ The verb "walk," by a metaphor very common in the Bible, expresses the whole of living, the inner life and the ordered conduct. The condition by which both are to be ruled is "faith, not sight." We may, if we choose, refuse to accept the condition; but in that case we cannot reasonably expect the result. The Life of the Christian, with all its present powers, the powers of the Holy Ghost and of the world to come,² and with its immense and glorious future, can be received and retained only under the condition that we will discipline our inner motives and order our outward lives, conform our principles and our practices, to the commands of One Whom we have not seen, and with reference to issues of which we have no other assurance than His words, credibly transmitted to us. To do this is an act of Faith; it is also evidently an act of the will. A man may do it, or may not do it, as he chooses; but in either case he exercises his will, and incurs responsibility.

It will be recognized, of course, that this state-

¹ 2 Corinthians, v, 7; iv, 18. Romans, viii, 18-25. See also Hebrews, xi, with special reference to xii, 1-12.

² Hebrews, vi, 4-6.

ment confronts at once a strong prepossession. The minds of men are possessed beforehand with the impression that because one aspect of Faith is belief, intellectual acceptance, therefore that is the whole of Faith. A palpable *non sequitur*, true, but one endued with all the power of resolute ignorance. Faith is belief; a man cannot believe by an action of the will; therefore a man cannot by using his will exercise faith. So runs the unformulated syllogism which has resulted in a devastating practical fallacy.

It will be asked then: If Faith be more than belief, what is Faith? A reply is due, yet categorical definition is impossible; if attempted, an essay of demonstration would be needed in explanation and support. Faith, like light, is complex; it can be analyzed into several components, as the prism resolves the light of the sun into several colors, each of which possesses its peculiar virtue and its particular influence in the whole result. Primarily, Faith has its subjective and objective aspects. It is on the one hand a faculty, or power, of the man himself; while on the other it is directed towards, rests upon, something external to him. The two correspond, are correlative. Faith appears in one form as a conclusion of the intellect, resting upon reasons which fall short of perception by the senses, and to this aspect modern prepossession has sought to confine it; but the words "trust" and "confidence," closely cognate to Faith, as the etymology of confidence shows, represent phases of Faith which are moral in character.

Again, Faith is susceptible of growth, like any other faculty. On the intellectual side, it may be increased by the accumulation of evidence, or by deeper reflection; it will even gather vigor by simple abiding in the assurance in which it began,¹ unconsciously, as a plant grows. On the moral side, confidence and trust, in one's self or in Another, can develop under repeated experiences, which are the external or objective sustenance of Faith; or they do so by repeated exercise, which is an internal effort of the will. Thus it was charged as a moral fault against the Israelites in the wilderness, that, though they had seen the works of God, had had experience of Him, they had not known His ways;² had not, as we say, profited by their experience, so as to perceive with the mind and obey with the will.

It is unreasonable to expect that the faith in which a man first comes to Christ, and accepts Him as Lord and Master, should have reached already the full power of belief expressed in the word "Conviction," which is the ripened harvest of Faith on the intellectual and moral sides. Conviction, both in common usage and by derivation, conveys an idea stronger than that of a certainty possessed. A convinced man does not so much possess, as is possessed by, "conquered" (*con-vinco*) by, the belief which he holds. The first disciples followed Christ, when their faith was by His own definition less than a grain of mustard seed.³ It was inadequate as yet to full moral effect

¹ Hebrews, iii, 14.

² Hebrews, iii, 7-12. Numbers, xiv, 11, 12, 20-24.

³ St. Matthew, xvii, 19-21. St. Luke, xvii, 5, 6.

upon life; intellectually, it was for the time incapable of understanding His plainest speech; but it none the less held the germ of the mighty works of the Faith which revolutionized Europe, and will yet revolutionize the world.

The confidence, the trust, of a little child is probably the completest illustration of Faith on its moral side.¹ It is unreasoning, and in so far defective; yet it is not unreasonable, for, however unconsciously, it rests upon experience, usually of the conduct, the "works," of a person whom the child knows. As a rule, an infant shrinks from those whom it does not know, of whom it has no experience. Doubtless, we all throughout life trust persons, but other considerations enter and modify. The confidence is not simple, single-eyed, as is that of a child. The child does not know what the person will do next, nor whither he is taking him at any particular moment; like the father of the faithful, "he goes out, not knowing whither he goes."² This manifests the power of Faith over action; but does not supply the reasonable basis for a full grown man to trust a Person whom he has not seen, before he has experience of Him. The faith of the child befits the child; but the man not only must, but should, put away childish things. Yet what a loss of comfort and of strength that putting away means we all know, and what a weary way to travel back to reach once more the child's trust in the Father. To *know* Thee,

¹ St. Matthew, xviii, 3; xix, 14. St. Mark, x, 15. St. Luke, xviii, 17.

² Hebrews, xi, 8. Acts, vii, 2-5.

the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou has sent,¹ is in chief measure a matter of experience, like that of a child's.

With these two examples before us, viz., the growth of the Apostles' faith and the realized completeness of a child's trust, — upon which his future as well as present depends, — together with the power over action which Faith in both instances shows, we have at once the motive for effort and the guide as to its direction and reasonable expectations. A man need not demand of himself at the beginning more than the less than the grain of mustard seed. The Apostles followed Christ, not because they saw in Him what Christians now believe, nor yet for purely unselfish reasons. "What shall we have therefor?"² was doubtless a question with the Twelve, and not with St. Peter only. Yet, with all the loss and doubts and uncertainties revealed by the question, they nevertheless had made a definite choice, moral in character and resting upon reasons. They had forsaken all and followed Christ, had made a choice between Him and seeming self-interest; and that choice was motivated by the recognition, however imperfect and dim, of a character, of a Person,³ of Him. These two — the choice and the Person — are the chief elements of religious faith.

We may, therefore, without great probable error, and for present purposes, define Faith as being in its beginnings a moral choice, resting upon confidence in a Person, and carried into practical action, to which

¹ St. John, xvii, 3.

² St. Matthew, xix, 27; xx, 20-24.

³ St. John, vi, 66-69.

intellectual certainty is subordinate in place and may be subsequent in time. Thus St. Paul writes, If thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved; for *with the heart* man believeth unto righteousness.¹ Here also appeal may confidently be made to the conditions upon which the Life of the Christian is offered. From the Master Himself come the words, If any man willeth to do God's will, — will "walk" in the sense above defined, — he shall know the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of Myself.² Moral choice, to do God's will, results ultimately in knowledge, a condition of the intellect. Yet not of the intellect only; there is heart knowledge as well as brain knowledge. There is a knowledge also which escapes analysis, the one accurate account of which is embraced in the word "conviction," a knowledge directly ministered to man by the Spirit of God. So also in moral choice the intellect enters, discerning good from evil; but that which chooses the good is the will.

But, it may be replied, This is a natural process; many men thus choose good and reject evil without being Christians, with no claim or thought of a living union with Christ by Faith. Undoubtedly. Christianity — which is Christ — denies not the good that is in man. He came to fulfil,³ not only the Law and the Prophets, the best that man knew before His time, but whatsoever else of good is found in man and through man. A Christian may in no

¹ Romans, x, 9, 10.

² St. John, vii, 17.

³ St. Matthew, v, 17-20.

wise presume to condemn those who follow righteousness as they understand it, nor to speak lightly of their good deeds. Nevertheless, the Christian may not be backward to affirm that there is a better way, — a best way — which alone will fulfil all this, even as Christ does the Law and the Prophets; and that they who by their own neglect (which is their own will) do not choose that best way, fall short of the life which is God's gift to the Christian. They fall short of its powers, and may fall short of its rewards, by incurring the responsibility of an erring moral choice. The commands of Christ are not fully obeyed, the deeds He commands are not perfectly done, if they are done on their own merits merely and not in devotion to Him.

The moral or spiritual value of acts depends upon the motive. A man may discipline his body to make it a fitting instrument in God's service, or he may do the same to win a match. To substitute self-approval, walking by the sight of one's own eyes or judgment, for the approval of God, which is to walk by faith, involves a radical change of motive. Though the act remain identical, its spiritual significance is altered, and therewith its spiritual worth. The term "sight" applies as exactly to any form of simple self-dependence as it does to the evidence of the senses on which Science bases its conclusions. Dr. Johnson justly remarked that even "religious exercises, if not performed with an intention to please God, avail us nothing. As our Saviour says of those who perform them for other motives, 'They have their reward.'¹"

¹ St. Matthew, vi, 1-18.

The words of St. Paul, "They who run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize,"¹ apply exactly to the competition of motives in the same person. If the supreme motive be Christ, the reward will be one; if self-approval, or other lawful motive, another; if unlawful, a third.

The highest moral achievement is not the will to follow righteousness, nor yet the following it. The supreme moral choice is to follow righteousness because it is the expression of God's Being and God's Will. Faith has to do with a Person; it is the choice of good because it is God's good. In nothing was more conspicuous the downward tendency of a recent falling from faith than when the man said, of the Sermon on the Mount, "These things I accept, not because Christ said them, but because they commend themselves to my conscience, to my own moral sense." It would be difficult to phrase more pathetically the distinction between human righteousness and God's righteousness; a phase of that which St. Paul teaches in his antithesis of Faith and Works.

Faith, therefore, is the choice of good in devotion to God. There is herein a fullness of life and of joy which exalts the creature as no following of righteousness for its own sake, or as satisfying one's own conscience can do; because the ground for satisfaction is shifted from the pleasing of self to the pleasing of God, from self-approval to God's approval. The reasonableness of this must be manifest to any who will discard prepossession and recognize human nature as it is, — the conditions

¹ 1 Corinthians, ix, 24-27.

upon which our common life is offered to us. What we need in life is not only a right choice and effort. We need also fullness, power; and in human life, as we know it historically, there is no force so universal and supreme as that of devotion — love — to a person. Where it enters there enters a fullness of motive and of energy to which naught else compares. "It is lord of all." That it is often transient; that it is often aroused by an unworthy object; that it is itself too often defiled with baser impulses, — all these deductions only emphasize the more its might, in that even when alloyed or debased it remains supreme. We may think it were better otherwise; but, Johnson again, there it is, one of the conditions — the greatest — on which even our common life is offered us. Give to love permanency, intrinsic purity of motive, growing intensity, and a worthy object, and there is added to the life of man a wealth, not of happiness only, but of power; and not of power only, but of a self-purifying agency which by its own action continually exalts character by subjecting self. And let it be remembered, as a leading factor in the Christian argument, that this love is not merely a human love for God, but the "love of God"; that is, God's own love, made ours in our measure by our vital union with Jesus Christ. As man grows spiritually, God's love, almighty, pure, enduring "to the end,"¹ is wrought in man and becomes his own.

Consider what God's love is, as manifested to us; not in its fullness, intrinsically, for that we cannot

¹ St. John, xiii, 1.

fathom, since it has the measure of infinitude. The love of the Father to the Son, of the Son for the Father, of Each to and from the Holy Spirit, as told to us, might be open to the retort which our Lord addresses to mankind: Thou lovest Him who loves Thee;¹ but, to use St. Paul's expression, God commendeth His own love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. While we were enemies, He spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all.² In Creation, God has found the opportunity and the occasion for manifesting love to the unthankful and to the evil³ — to His enemies. Nor can we measure the greatness of that love, because we imperfectly realize the repulsiveness to God of Sin, in which consists the enmity to Him.⁴

We therefore may give ungrudging admiration to the strong man who fights his life's battle, and runs his life's course in the pure moral choice of righteousness for righteousness' sake; finding in self-approval sufficient support and sufficient reward; hoping nothing from the future, believing nothing concerning God, fearing nothing. But when we shall have exhausted recognition of so grand a heroism, are we bound not to admit that there is something grievously lacking, not to the man's joy, — a motive he might himself reject, — but to the fullness of his life, which means the full-

¹ St. Matthew, v, 43-48.

² Romans, v, 8, 10; viii, 32.

³ St. Luke, vi, 27-36.

⁴ Romans, viii, 7. Ephesians, ii, 2-4. Colossians, i, 21. St. James, iv, 4.

ness of his service as well? No such hero has ever existed who in devotedness of life has exceeded multitudes of the Cross-bearers, from the Leader down through His host of followers. What we specifically admire in these instances, few relatively to those offered by Christian Faith, is not the achievement nor the self-denial, to which the annals of Christendom furnish innumerable parallels, but the heroism which has done so much for naught. But it is a needless heroism, a wasted heroism, and a great falling short. The heroism had to be put forth, because the power which God would supply has been rejected. The man's being, which is chief among his duties to his fellows, is abnormally developed; heroism beyond what was required of him, the power of love for God eschewed. The faculty for that love has dwindled by neglect; the love is lacking which by the purity of its motive, the worthiness of its object, the increasing power it derives from that object, not only fulfills the man's being but thereby fulfills also his power. "As the man is, so is his strength." Shall our admiration belie our intelligence and call this one-sided result success in a fruitful sense? As well contend that an abnormal power of hearing were well purchased by a total loss of sight.

For, love for One thus worthy furnishes a motive and a power with which, for unremitting force, no passion for self-development can vie. No motive that terminates in self, not even the passion for perfection, can in this respect equal the impulse which seeks Another's honor. Moments cannot but come

when the question will arise: "Is it worth while thus to punish the natural self for the welfare of the ideal self?" We have a striking instance, of a celebrated French author of chaste life, in his old age condoning as venial the gross faults from which, in virtue of early prepossession or of temperament, he had kept his prime. In the face of his own record he esteemed it a light matter to sacrifice continence to pleasure. Could this be so to a man who sees in sin deadly offence, less to his own self-respect than to one beloved? Contrast the conclusion of St. Paul: Your bodies are temples of God, members of Christ; will you defile them?¹ The question closes discussion.

In the choice between self and self, what account is to be rendered in moments of passion or depression? The answer is not lacking to one who loves Another. Failures and sins may befall him, — there is none that sinneth not;² but the bitterness is not in the injury to his own person, to his self-respect, but in the wrong to Him he loves. That in his own estimation he sins, is his avowal that the reason for good has remained unchallenged through all; a reason not only satisfying to the intellect, for that it should be admitted the plea for self-exaltment may be, but satisfying as well to the heart, out of which are the issues of life.

In the strong necessity for loving with which we find ourselves constituted, man does not fulfill his

¹ 1 Corinthians, iii, 16, 17; vi, 15-20. Compare St. John, ii, 19-22.

² 1 St. John, 1, 8. Romans, iii, 9, 10, 23. St. James, iii, 2.

being till he thus loves worthily One worthy of his love. No doing takes the place of being; nothing one does can be a substitute for what one is. Works are as nothing to loving.¹ This loving, receiving from God and giving back to God is The Life of the Christian, because it is pre-eminently the Life of Christ, Who is his life. In this strong necessity for loving adequately, loving worthily some one worthy of love, doubtless lies something of the mystery of the Trinity, of the Divine Nature in the likeness of which God has created man. As requisite to the fullness of His Being, which Being is Love, even the Father needs that which is relatively external to His Person and yet commensurate to His Infinity. An object thus worthy can be presented to Him only in One who "is the express Image of His Person."²

In a recent American novel, of much charm and interest, one of the characters, apparently doubtful concerning the existence of God, states as his aspiration the high standard of excellence which he finds himself capable of conceiving. But is that sufficing? — I do not say "sufficient." Does such a subjective conception present that externality to self which love must find in order to act fully, to fulfill itself? So to limit aspiration is, essentially, to love self; to find self-satisfaction in having reached a self-erected standard, — a caricature of conscience. The human mind may frame the

¹ Revelation, ii, 2-4. 1 Corinthians, xiii.

² Hebrews, i, 1-3. 2 Corinthians, iv, 4. Colossians, i, 15.

thought, though it cannot grasp the idea,¹ that the force of God's "I AM"² may be such that the consciousness betokened by that Name may pass into begetting;³ "the very image of His substance"⁴ thus receiving "life in Himself,"⁵ co-eternal with the Father, constituting within the Godhead the distinction which has been defined as one of Persons, Each receiving from the Other love, and to that Other giving back love. Thus there should always have been the Son when the Father was; but a human consciousness cannot endue its conception of itself with that exteriority, that separate existence, which is real enough to elicit even human love in its fullness. In sum, man needs that which only God can supply, not merely a standard for attainment but an adequate object of devotion.

That we might the more certainly find this object, with clear assurance of mind and of heart, Christianity affirms that God has manifested Himself to us in a perfect human life. The Man Who led this Life is the near object of Faith. By Him we draw near to God;⁶ for in Him we see the reality which corresponds to, and fulfils, our highest conception of a supreme excellence; more than fulfils, as the excellence of God exceeds the compass of man's mind.

¹ To understand the meaning of an expression by no means implies power to comprehend that meaning, even in finite matters. We understand the expression "a thousand millions," but who can image to his mind that number of units?

² Exodus, iii, 13-15.

³ St. John, i, 1, 2, 14, 18; iii, 16, 18; 1 St. John, iv, 9.

⁴ Hebrews, i, 3.

⁵ St. John, v, 26.

⁶ Hebrews, iv, 14-16; vii, 18-19, 25; x, 19-22. Ephesians, ii, 18.

He becomes to us our standard for attainment, our perfect example, all sufficing to our nature's demand for One to love.

Jesus Christ is all this, all that the word "motive" implies; but He is more. There is in Him, in His Being, that which can be transmitted to us as power; a vital force, which, springing from Him, Who has the life in Himself,¹ can be communicated to us, who in ourselves have not life² but only the possibilities thereof. So it is written of Him, specifically, "the last Adam became a life-giving Spirit."³ Thus the very love wherewith we love Him is communicated to us, depends on this union with Him. Communicated by communion, allied words; communion in its widest sense; of intellect, of heart, of speaking and of hearing, of asking and of teaching, of reciprocal affection. Of this interchange, — "I in you and you in Me,"⁴ to use His own words, — the Holy Communion, the Supper of the Lord, is the highest expression and continuous channel. It is the perpetual transmission of the Life of Christ Himself. This again, in repeated definition, is The Life of the Christian, — a life hid with Christ in God. Motive and Power; in these comprehensive words, which admit, and indeed in the end require, large expansion, we have what Jesus Christ is to us.

Whereby shall we know this? The question is fair; for in order that Christ may be to us all this, He makes upon us demands, the grounds for which

¹ St. John, v, 26.

² *Ibid.*, vi, 53 (Revised V.).

³ I Corinthians, xv, 22, 45-49. Romans, v, 14, 15.

⁴ St. John, xv, 4-7; vi, 56.

it is prudent to inquire. His yoke is easy and His burden is light;¹ but they are easy and light only by comparison with those of which He relieves us, and to them who by obedience have learned to bear and in Him have received strength. To forsake all and follow Him, to bring every thought into captivity to Christ,² are no light sacrifice, no small effort. The beginnings are hard, the continuance is hard, the surrenders are great. The reward is distant, though it does not all lie beyond the grave. Those who have tried Him assure us of the truth of the promise, and such evidence, the testimony of experience, is much, but it is a testimony of things unseen, though felt; it cannot be demonstrated to an inquirer. Experience is not transferable; and ere we accept the witness of others to that which we cannot test before we have made our surrenders, it is reasonable that we ask for evidence which can be brought to the bar of such judgment as we now possess.

A treatise on Christian evidences is not here in place nor in question. What is here wanted is a reasonable assurance for a practical action; for the moral choice called Faith; for taking the step of complying with Christ's requirements in order thereby to obtain His promise,—The Life of the Christian.³ In considering such reasons as will be offered, we should first remember three things.

1. Evidence is not proof. Evidence is the circum-

¹ St. Matthew, xi, 29, 30.

² 2 Corinthians, x, 5.

³ St. John, iii, 16; v, 21-24, 40; vi, 39, 40, 54; x, 7-16, 27, 28; xi, 25, 26.

stance, or circumstances, presented to a person with a view to establishing in his mind the assurance that a certain statement is true, or that a certain thing has happened. If the conviction is produced, the evidence becomes proof to the particular man; to another person it may not produce conviction, and hence to him is not proof. Conviction therefore depends in part upon the person,—his habit of mind, the prepossessions of his will, his candor, power of perception, of weighing evidence. For this reason even scientific men, who deal with things which can be tested by the senses, may and do disagree as to the explanation of those things. Their convictions, derived from the same facts, differ as to the origin or manner by which the facts come about. To one man they indicate one thing, to another another; while a third may content himself with saying, "I do not know." Accordingly, in considering Christian evidences, much will depend upon the manner of man the hearer is, the spirit in which he approaches the question, his willingness to use necessary means prescribed by Christ, such as prayer. Herein again we see the outcropping of a real responsibility. So lofty is the ethical standard set by Christ, so perfect the beauty of His Character as narrated to us, that one ought to wish that He might be shown to be that which He claims, and we need: the perfect object sought by love; the Unseen God made manifest in the flesh; the fulfillment, not merely of ethical aspiration, but of the heart's need to adore a Person. The inquirer must bring with him, not credulity indeed, but good will towards a great good.

2. Evidence which would be quite inadequate to hang a man, or to condemn him to imprisonment, may be sufficient to justify action; nay, to compel action. Life abounds in situations where men must make a choice, must act in one direction or another, upon imperfect information. This, again, is one of the conditions upon which even our common daily life is offered to us. In such cases the decision reached is essentially an act of faith, of belief; of conviction, more or less assured, that the situation, so far as indications go, demands the action (or inaction) taken.

But note that, when such imposed conclusion is reached, there follows often the need of a very high moral exertion, of an act of the will; that, namely, of giving one's self over to be possessed by the decision, to act as though it were certainty. Alternatives and hesitations are to be dismissed out of mind. This is Faith, even when exercised in other than religious matters. It is conspicuously required in military conduct, where the unknown quantities are gravest, most appalling. It is a high military virtue, to which in its perfection few attain; one chief factor in military success or unsucess. In this is seen an instance of the kinship between the standards of the soldier and the Christian. It is no misnomer to speak of Christianity as militant.

3. To this the Christian is bound to add that the conviction which we call Faith depends also upon the coöperation of God; or, as we say, of the Holy Ghost. Faith is a gift from God;¹ but it is a gift

¹ Ephesians, ii, 8, 9. St. John, vi, 44-46, 65.

which will certainly be given to any one who approaches with a candid wish to give himself to Christ, upon reasonable evidence of the truth of His Being and Message.¹ In Faith there is God's part and man's part. The man must be willing to accept the condition upon which the Life of the Christian is offered: "We walk by Faith, not by sight." He must be willing, that is, to act upon a conclusion which falls short of absolute demonstration, but which is to him reasonably probable; and as life passes he will be content with an assurance that grows with years and with "walking," — the assurance from experience, — for which in the end he may be able to give no other account than that it has been wrought in him. It is upon religious experience that the clear and penetrating intellect of Pascal ultimately based belief, as does Science upon experiment and observation.

The demand for Faith may seem unreasonable, but on the contrary it has the noblest reason. Consider that the object which Christ has proposed to Himself is the deliverance of man's nature from the power of sin, a power known to us all by our experience of the evil which is in us. His Name shall be called Jesus — Saviour — because He shall save His people *from their sins*.² Such deliverance — which in common phrase we name salvation — cannot be effected by coercion, nor by bribery. Could the full ultimate suffering and degradation, to which sin in the long ages will conduct us, be manifest to our eyes, our free will would be coerced; God would

¹ St. John, vii, 17.

² St. Matthew, i, 21.

become to us as the human persecutors who times without number have trodden down rebellious wills by terror of immediate consequences. In like manner, could the excellences of Heaven be seen as we see now the objects of earthly ambition, man's will might be bribed to struggle for the reward, as it now is for earthly enjoyment, power, fame, or wealth. In either such case, choice, if the word be not a mockery, would not be between right and wrong, — that is, moral, — but between personal well and ill being.

The punishment and the reward have indeed both been revealed; but to faith, not to sight. He who does not accept the testimony of Christ has of them no assurance, does not believe in them. He who accepts believes, not because he has seen, but because he believes Christ's word. And even to the believer, in the general, the expectation of the reward and punishment is one of the least of the motives that sway. This is shown by the small practical effect the fear of hell has produced upon men who none the less had a very real belief in it. It has influenced but little the course of history. Men's wills practically have been free to choose right or wrong, unsolicited by the issues of eternity. It was only fair, and therefore necessary, that these should be revealed, for they are a part of the decision. Accordingly, Christ Himself has revealed them in striking phrase, yet not in such wise as to coerce or bribe the will, but to leave it free to act by Faith in making moral choice, which choice is Himself. Follow Me.¹

¹ St. Matthew, iv, 18-22; x, 38; xvi, 24. St. John, xxi, 19-22.

Moreover, let it be remembered that while the will is thus left free to choose, under the sole impulse of Faith in Christ, there is not any lack of demonstration concerning the merits of the conduct of life, of the Christian pattern, the Life of Christ, in Christ, and for Christ, which each man is to choose or to reject. Its excellence is evident to all men, acknowledged by all. It is only concerning the motive to it that uncertainty is so far permitted that man may bring thereto, to the service of God, the offering of a free heart; free from motives lower than those of Faith and Hope and Love.

Thus freedom is secured to man in his highest and purest choice, which is not that between good and evil for himself, but between Christ and Self. This is a choice between Persons and between Wills; which shall be the Master, which shall control the life. As Christ while here on earth veiled His Divine personality under the likeness of man's flesh, so now that Personality, the motive of choice, continues veiled except to the eye of Faith. Not to a faith without reason, nor without reasons; but which yet remains Faith, because its reasons fall short of that ocular, positive demonstration, to which the Bible accurately applies the contrasted physical term, — Sight.¹ Belief without reasons is not faith, but credulity. Belief upon demonstration of the senses is not faith, but sight, — perception and acceptance of a scientific fact.² Faith has reasons, although they

¹ 2 Corinthians, iv, 18; v, 7. St. John, xx, 24-29.

² Sight in its broad sense covers all the organs of perception by which phenomena are recognized.

are reasons which fall short of ocular demonstration; but it possesses also conviction, by the working of the power of God upon the faculties of man. He that believeth hath the witness in himself, writes St. John.¹ The Holy Ghost shall bear witness of me,² said our Lord. The highest historical expression of faith, St. Peter's "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," elicited the Master's comment: Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah! for flesh and blood (the senses or the brain) have not revealed this unto thee, but My Father which is in Heaven.³

St. Peter had reasons, and he besides had conviction. The reasons were the human side of his faith; he had chosen Christ, lived with Christ, communed with Christ, and pondered what he saw and heard. Such a procedure constitutes a chain of conduct and of growing perception, conscious or subconscious, tending towards an inference. It is watchfulness, seeking, observing, learning, experiment; the due use of means; in method cognate to that of science. St. Peter had, more or less, fulfilled the conditions of the moral choice. He had "walked" with Christ; and to him came the reward — perception and conviction, a revelation from God. Here are stated the two sides of Faith; and that in respect of what is, and must ever remain, the briefest and yet most consummate expression of the Faith of the Christian, the foundation stone, the seed-root, in the Life of the Christian. Let it be observed that "Blessed" is a condition of

¹ 1 St. John, v, 10.

² St. John, xv, 26.

³ St. Matthew, xvi, 15-17. St. Mark, viii, 27-29.

reception, not of achievement; passive, not active; though doubtless bestowed in recognition of past action.

The Christian of to-day has also his reasons. They are not the result of personal observation, sustained throughout the Redeemer's life on earth, as was the case with St. Peter. Yet they are strictly analogous; not the same, but like. Instead of observation, they rest upon testimony, as does every historical fact anteceding the personal observation of any generation living upon earth. Like St. Peter, though not in the same way, Christians of to-day have "walked" with Christ; not as he did, seeing His actions, but having felt His call they have walked with Him in the story of His Life, which they have studied day by day, till known, not by mind only, but by heart. They have not heard His Voice, as St. Peter daily did; but they have read what He said, and pondered the beauty of His precepts, the ethical perfectness of which has compelled the homage even of a disobedient world. We have not seen the works, concerning which the Christ Himself ere His Death said, "If I had not done among them the works that none other man did, they had not had sin;"¹ but we have the evidence of the one subsequent surpassing exhibition of the Power that wrought those works, — His Resurrection from the dead.

These are our reasons: His Life, His Words, His Resurrection. Concerning these, the first two are as one; His Words are the echo of His Life. Out

¹ St. John, xv, 24.

of the abundance of the heart the mouth indeed speaketh;¹ but of Him we have the record that what He taught, He did. So lofty are His teachings, so perfect the standard, that the most substantial, though untenable, criticism upon them is that they pass the possible for man. Yet His Life witnesses that man has once reached the standard; and His Life is the Life of the Christian, the Power which worketh in us,² carrying the assurance that in the end the follower shall attain where His Master led. "Every one that is perfected shall be as His Master."³ It may require eternity to complete the process, to which certainly no compass of man's life on earth is sufficient.

In such a prospect is there nothing that demands of the hearer a *desire* to believe? a desire to find such an One, to know such an One, to love such an One? a desire to be like Him, not because we shall have pleasure in our own perfection, but because our perfection shall please such an One as He is, and do works for God and man such as He wrought? Can we without fault consider as indifferent the establishing with Him the relations of mutual affection, which shall introduce into our lives steadfast power, such as that of which we see certain limited illustrations continually reflected in imperfect human nature? The love of mother for child, of wife for husband, of daughter for parent, who so unhappy as not to have seen something of the power and

¹ St. Matthew, xii, 33-37; xv, 18. St. Luke, vi, 45. St. James, iii. 2-12.

² Ephesians, i, 17-20.

³ St. Luke, vi, 40.

sweetness these bring into life? shown not in feeling merely, but in action in its most strenuous form, endurance through good and ill. And in what rest that power and sweetness? Not in being loved, but in loving. Not in the self, even in the form of self-perfection, but in Another, even in Him Who loved him and gave Himself for him,¹—the full story of the Cross from His birth to His rising again.

Hereunto Faith points us; and it is with the prepossession towards such a condition, of loving such a Being, with the desire to believe, that a man should approach the crucial question of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ; the one supreme evidence conceded to the senses, the evidence of Sight, upon which the two chief Christian leaders, St. Paul and St. Peter, rest the foundation truth of Christianity.² That truth is, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God with Power, so proclaimed by the Resurrection from the dead.³ Between the life of Sight based upon the evidence of the senses, and the life of Faith resting in things unseen, the Resurrection of Jesus Christ stands, laying a hand on each, bridging the chasm, even as the two natures, Divine and human, are joined in His Personality, which lays hand on God and Man, uniting them by an unseverable bond; the Daysman whom Job in his trouble sought in vain.⁴

It is morally right, and incumbent upon each man, that he should consider this assertion candidly, according to the powers of reason possessed

¹ Galatians, ii, 20.

² Acts, ii, 22-32; xiii, 30-37.

³ Romans, i, 4.

⁴ Job, ix, 32, 33.

by him; that the desirableness of the result should not be permitted to blind his judgment or force his convictions. But his deliberation must be governed by the recognition that the issue at stake is not one of merely speculative curiosity, but of immediate vital importance to the individual and to the race. It is not morally permissible to maintain an attitude of indifference towards statements such as the following: that there not only has been, but is now, risen from the dead, actually existent as a working Power among men, such an One as we know Jesus Christ to have been; that we can enter into relations with Him of loving and being loved; that He may be, at our will, a present factor of almighty power in our lives. Indifference is forbidden; for the result of Faith has been to the race of Man great and beneficent. Upon the truth of these propositions, demonstrated to them, millions of men through nineteen centuries have rested their conduct of life; not merely dying in hope, but living in devotion, in self-surrender. The motive and purpose of life has been summed up to them in the loving words, "To be with Christ;"¹ here in spirit and in struggle, — "Whom, having not seen, ye love,"² hereafter in present sight and closest service. Love such that not even for that present sight would they quit His work below before He calls. "To depart and be with Christ is far better," says St. Paul. "Nevertheless, to abide in the flesh is more needful" for the work Christ wants of him, and he is content to wait.

¹ Philippians, i, 23.

² 1 St. Peter, i, 8.

To them who have learned thus to regard Jesus Christ, the promises have meant not a life of glorified ease, such as a luxurious imagination has pictured Heaven, but the introduction into their being of a motive force, the power of love, issuing from God in Christ, in the strength of which there shall be wrought in them a love to Him which shall accomplish His great purpose, for which He died; even likeness to Him, which is perfection. "I count all things but loss," says St. Paul, "for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for Whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in Him; . . . that I may know Him, and the power of His Resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death, if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead;"¹ that is, unto likeness to Him glorified. When I shall wake up after Thy likeness, I shall be satisfied with it.²

Not indeed that we, so weak to bear, may affect carelessness about environment, indifference to the surroundings, whatever they be, that constitute Heaven; that we should think scorn of that pleasant land;³ but that, above all, that whereunto we are supremely called is to love God, to enter into possession of a faculty which in its inevitable outcome constitutes the greatest happiness and the utmost motive of which God or man is capable. God is Love; the follower of Jesus Christ also shall be

¹ Philippians, iii, 8-11.

² Psalm, xvii, 16 (Psalter).

³ Psalm, cvi, 24 (Psalter).

love. God in His measure, which is infinite; man, each according to the measure of his personality and service, as star differeth from star in glory. This is our living hope, unto which, to use the words of St. Peter, we are begotten by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.¹

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, as transmitted to us by those who assert that they saw Him, that they did eat and drink with Him after He rose from the dead,² although wrought by Spiritual Power, is a fact in the physical order. It was tested, so the witnesses report, by the senses of sight, hearing, and touch. It must be clearly kept in mind that the Apostles of Jesus Christ led their laborious and hazardous lives, ending for the most part in death by violence for His sake, and laid the foundations of the mighty edifice of Christianity which endures to this day, not in the strength of certain opinions, which they believed, but in the assurance that they themselves had repeatedly seen Jesus Christ, risen from the dead. "Witnesses of His Resurrection" is their one commission, and the key note of preaching for the Church they founded in His Name.³ This their assertion is from its nature historic fact, — or falsehood; but unlike most historic incidents of the past, the truth of it is not to us morally indifferent. Upon its truth or falsity, as it appears to us, we must make a moral decision;

¹ 1 St. Peter, i, 3.

² Acts, x, 41. St. Luke, xxiv, 41-43. St. John, xxi, 12-15.

³ Acts, i, 8, 22; ii, 24-36; iii, 15; iv, 2, 10, 20, 33; v, 30-32; x, 38-43; xiii, 29-39; xvii, 3, 31; xxiii, 6; xxiv, 15, 21; xxvi, 6-8, 22, 23.

whether to accept Christ, with all the promises involved in His being what they said, of which His Resurrection is the offered proof, or to reject Him as being no more than a man of consummate excellence of character, long since dead, to whom we owe naught beyond a tribute of admiration. Thus rejected, He can no longer add to life anything beyond the usefulness of His teaching; which, moreover, possesses no authority beyond our own approval. Where it appears extravagant or faulty, it can thus carry no weight of authority due to the Person of the teacher.

If what has before been said as to the Life of the Christian, its present power and its future promise, be accepted as a just statement of Christian teaching, the choice here to be made, dependent upon the acceptance or rejection of the Resurrection, is no mere matter of personal predilection. It is the acceptance or rejection of a personal excellence, to be wrought in the character, not to be had on any other terms than those proffered by Christ. And character is destiny. As the man pronounces his decision, he chooses the better or the worse. He is not choosing or rejecting a personal advantage, even though that advantage be Heaven; he is choosing or rejecting Jesus Christ, and with Christ the only power able to fulfil in his personality the purpose for which God brought him into being. There is no other way. There is none other name under Heaven given among men whereby we may be saved;¹ and that name, — Jesus, Saviour, — let it be kept clearly in view, was

¹ Acts, iv, 12.

ascribed to Him because He should save His people from their sins.¹ His name expresses His Office; to those who will receive Him, His Office insures His mission. To them gives He power to become the sons of God.²

In the failure to recognize the extreme solemnity of this decision, a failure which takes no account of the moral element, but sees in it merely an intellectual process of weighing evidence and striking a balance, involving no responsibility for consequences, such as we see to follow upon other mistakes in life, we may probably find the explanation of much indifference, under the specious guise of tolerant opinion, among the nominally Christian, as well as among the unbelieving; but should the Christian be tempted, by the misleading term "tolerance," to condone the non-belief — rather than unbelief — which the majority of mankind show towards the Christian message, he should recognize that tolerance of that character is not the attitude of his Exemplar. While ever manifesting towards the individual the infinite patience of the Godhead, Christ's word is clear concerning the general fact of indifference, of non-belief. "The light is come into the world," and failure to recognize it proceeds ultimately from the will, in which resides the moral value of action, or non-action; "men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil." These conditions, united in His phrase, constitute His judgment, which is associated to them, and pronounced explicitly by Him: "He that believeth not hath been judged already [by the very

¹ St. Matthew, i, 21.

² St. John, i, 12, 13.

fact of that unbelief], because he hath not believed on the Name of the only-begotten Son of God. And this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world," etc. Let it be noted, too, that these stern words follow directly upon that declaration which has ever been considered the fullest compact expression of the Gospel message of Divine Love: God so loved the World that He gave His Only-Begotten Son, to the end that all that believe in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.¹

Indifference reproduces, is but another result, of the standpoint which sees in Faith merely an intellectual condition, without moral factor. In consequence, considering the evidence of the Resurrection to fall short of absolute demonstration, liberty is felt to reject the fact, without any consideration of the moral element involved in the rejection. And this is doubly serious; because the testimony to the Resurrection is sufficient, intellectually, to establish any ordinary historical incident. Rejection proceeds not on the ground of evidence defective in itself, but of evidence considered defective to prove so extraordinary, so unparalleled, an occurrence. As an intellectual proposition, therefore, rejection rests upon the inference that that which never has happened in any other observed instance, or which is contrary to those sustained sequences of cause and effect known to us as the laws of nature, cannot have happened in a particular instance. While admitting the tremendous force of prepossession founded upon an experience believed to be unvarying, it must never-

¹ St. John, iii, 16-21.

theless be said that this position is untenable; it is a *non sequitur*. That which never has occurred may occur. This Earth has endured for — let us say — millions of years; yet it is untenable to affirm that it may not one day — to-morrow — be dissolved. From time to time the skies above us bear witness to our eyes of catastrophes, to which such dissolution of our planet would be but an incident. In the stars themselves appear signs that there impends ever over this planet the possibility of a consummation by fire, such as was predicted by Christ and His apostles.

Or, if the force of prepossession, engendered by this too solid Earth, prevent our feeling the possibility of this proposition concerning its future, let us ponder for a moment an ever present mystery of the past, — the origin of the material Universe as revealed to us by the telescope. Concerning this there are two possible conceptions, one of which is inevitably true. 1, the Universe, although in perpetual change, has always existed, has had no beginning; or, 2, it came into existence, not necessarily in its present development, but under some form or other, at a definite period, however remote. Of these two, the first makes upon imagination a demand to which it is unequal; a circumstance which by no means proves that the conception is untrue. The second, summarily stated, means that at one instant the Universe was not, while at a near subsequent instant it was; not indeed as we now see it, but in some state of origin. Now our imagination can place us between these moments; and having done so, as we gaze on absolute void, what more unlikely, antecedent

to experience, than that it should be filled with millions of suns and their satellites. Yet there they are, however improbable such creation might appear to a human mind existing before it. Antecedently to experience, the exceptional resurrection of a human body from physical death is not more improbable than either conception of the Universe. Either is unparalleled by aught else known to us. Yet the Universe exists; a fact intrinsically more marvellous than even the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Well might St. Paul ask, Why should it be thought incredible to you that God should raise the dead? ¹

This insufficiency of the intellectual reason for rejection makes necessary for decision to take into account the moral element — the moral witness — involved in rejecting the Resurrection, and therewith Christ Himself. And this the more so, because the intellectual argument, the appeal to the intelligence, is extremely strong, when once the argument of impossibility is put aside. It may be asserted, with a probability scarcely falling short of absolute certainty, that the undeniable historic fact of Christianity, as now existing before our eyes, has no other historic origin than the particular incident of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. True or false in itself, the Apostles base upon it alone their mission to mankind. To them it is not, as to us it must be, a matter of the testimony of others. It is one of personal experience at first hand. They themselves have seen, heard, touched, conversed, eaten, and drunk with Him risen; not once or twice, but repeatedly.

¹ Acts, xxvi, 8.

Let there here be clearly kept in mind the distinction between the matter of fact of the Resurrection itself, and the other matter of fact that the Apostles believed, asserted, that they had witnessed it. Their assertion, coupled with the fact that on the strength of their belief they dared the dangers they did, lived, labored, and died for the truth of it, and on this conviction established a system which to this day endures substantially unaltered, in teaching and influence, having in the meantime shaped the lives of millions of individuals and the standards of the nations we call Christian, — all this indeed is a strong argument that the Resurrection did occur, as stated. As an argument it thus has value; but as a fact, an historic fact, or series of facts, it is entirely distinct from the Resurrection itself. That the Apostles so asserted and so acted is one statement, be it true or false; that Christ did rise again is another and separate statement. It is possible to believe the first and reject the second; although in such case it is reasonable to demand some other equally adequate explanation.

Again, it must be noted that the assertions and actions of the Apostles in this respect are wholly within the sphere of ordinary historical evidence. What they said and did, and whether they so said and did, are to be judged by the same canons of criticism that apply to the sayings and doings of any other characters in history. There is in these nothing of what we call the supernatural. The Apostles affirm as true something supernatural; but their affirmation itself is in the natural order, and on that

score the statement that they made it presents no difficulty to acceptance. Thus considered, there can be little question that conviction of the Resurrection, by men who believed themselves to have had intercourse with the Risen Christ, was the determinative factor in the preaching of Christianity, — or rather of Christ; for the term Christian and its derivatives are posterior to the first preaching that Jesus is the Christ. The Apostles preached Christ Crucified and Risen; and they so preached Him because, and only because, they believed they had seen Him Risen. They give no other reason, no other explanation; and when brought to the bar of Jewish judgment allege no other justification for the preaching which subverted Judaism by fulfilling it, and which revolutionized the world of Roman and Greek civilization, to which we are the heirs. Such a fact, historically as assured as any other fact of the same period, is one strong argument that the other fact, that of the Resurrection itself, occurred, substantially as stated. It is one great argument among several.

I do not propose to enter in detail into the other arguments for the actuality of the Resurrection,— that Christ's Body did not see corruption, neither His Spirit remain in Hades; that the two were united again on the third day. The affirmation of the Resurrection is nothing short of this double statement. Succinctly, these other arguments are: 1, the teaching of St. Paul; and, 2, the narratives of the incidents attending the Resurrection, as given in the four Gospels. It is apposite here to introduce a remark: that we have in the History of Christianity

two related sets of events, between which there is an evident chasm that requires to be bridged. We have the story of Christ's Life and Teaching, up to and including the Crucifixion and Death. We have further the preaching of the first Apostles, the Twelve and St. Paul, and the entire subsequent history of Christendom, continuous in progress to this present day. Between the two lies a gulf; for such it is — apart from the Resurrection.

Sown in weakness, are the facts antecedent; raised in power, are the facts subsequent. A Teacher, lovely in character, wise with an inscrutable wisdom, in which tenderness and insight compete for pre-eminence; heroic in temperament, but expressly disclaiming all resort to force for propagating His teaching; a small band of followers, irresistibly attracted and bound by a personality, the beauty and power of which inspire wild hopes, but imperfect comprehension; faint gleams of perception from time to time, as in St. Peter's confession, flashing through a mist of perplexity as to what it all actually means; a gradual gathering of gloom and adverse powers, predictive of failure; arrest, trial, execution of the Leader; the destruction of every formulated expectation, as well as of the vague anticipations of some great temporal revolution which should set Jesus upon the throne of Israel; Himself forsaken by His followers, who, now that He whose Person united them has been apparently destroyed, scatter every man to his own, to their accustomed occupations, as we all do in this sorrowful world when one dear to us has been taken away.

The fishing scene in St. John's Gospel¹ reproduces in miniature the exact outcome of the death of Christ, had He not risen; a result precisely parallel to those recalled by Gamaliel.² On Friday the ministry of three years had ended in disaster and ignominy. "We trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel;"³ but He is dead, and the old authorities, the Roman Pontius Pilate, Herod, the chief priests and rulers of Israel, remain in full possession of all that power which Jesus was expected to assume.

Hope had departed. Despite their love to Him, the Apostles had not risen to the assurance of His Resurrection. He had foretold it to them; but like other sayings it was for the time too hard. The first message brought of it was to them as an idle tale.⁴ By their own admission, they had not perceived in their own scriptures the predictive assurance that the Christ must first suffer death, and yet not be holden of it.⁵ This dejection, hopeless in outlook, is historical fact, and perfectly natural. Equally historical is the fact that seven weeks later this cowed band of a dozen men, backed only by a scant hundred followers,⁶ men and women, mostly

¹ Chapter xxi. ² Acts, v, 36, 37. ³ St. Luke, xxiv, 21.

⁴ *Ibid.*, xxiv, 11. ⁵ *Ibid.*, xxiv, 22-26. St. John, xx, 9.

⁶ The conversion of the three thousand at Pentecost may be alleged against this reckoning; but it must be remembered that at that early stage those only could be counted on who had endured through the trials of Holy Week and Good Friday. The Apostles within one week had heard the Hosannas of Sunday followed by the "Crucify Him" of Friday. Many, probably, of the three thousand had echoed both cries.

nameless, confront to their faces the rulers who had slain their Master; defy the authority, the ruthlessness and power of which had been shown in the Crucifixion, — power based upon a fanatical populace, — and tax both mob and rulers with the crime of shedding innocent blood, — even the blood of the promised Messiah. They fill Jerusalem with their doctrine, and boldly impute this Man's blood to the Chief Priest and his associates.¹

Their explanation of this change is that He who had died upon the Cross had risen from the dead; that He had been with them for forty days, giving instruction for their future course; that He had "ascended into the heavens" some ten days before, commanding them to defer any action till there should come upon them that which He called "Power from on high."² The one determinative feature of all this is the Resurrection; the remainder is detail, however important; nay, however essential. The Resurrection is their one explanation; the rest is accessory. Here it is proper to add to the testimony of the Twelve the other witness, — St. Paul. If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain; your faith is also vain, and they who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished.³ If Christ be dead, Death, so far as appears, is an eternal sleep.⁴ Here Christian Faith takes its stand, not in desperation but in assurance.

¹ Acts ii, 22-24; iii, 13-15; iv, 8-11, 13, 18-21; v, 27-33, 40-42; vii, 51-60.

² St. Luke, xxiv, 49. Acts, i, 8. ³ 1 Corinthians, xv, 12-19.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 32.

The Resurrection is the only explanation the Apostles gave to link their past of overthrow, dismay, and utter hopelessness with their present of enthusiastic triumph, courage, and confidence of victory. From this beginning of their preaching to the present state of Christendom the historic chain of events is without break; and it also is in the purely natural order, so far as outward manifestation is concerned. No other historic explanation has been given than that Christ rose again. Many theories have been put forth to account for the imposing series of events and influences which has been manifested in the history of the Christian Faith, despite its numerous remissnesses; but they are only theories. I do not herein affirm that they are not true; I say only they are not historical. They do not rest on evidence, but on surmise, however ingenious. They remain unimpeached only by denying the one historical evidence available, — the account of the Apostles; the statements of those who were the prime agents in the great transaction of starting Christianity on its course, and who for motive, and power, and authority, alleged but one fact, — that they were eye-witnesses of His Resurrection. Many men have died for their opinions. It is unusual to find twelve men ready to die for the truth of one and the same event, of which each one professes to be an eye-witness, when they know all along that they have not seen it.

That history has no other explanation than this for the recovery of the followers from the stunning effect of the Master's overthrow and death, — a

recovery from which all subsequent Christian history proceeds as a river from its source, — is to me the most imposing proof of the truth of their assertion. A stupendous fact requires of explanation that it be adequate. The Resurrection by itself alone is adequate to the great result; and it alone is as an explanation historical. It is not easy to overstate the weight of two such factors, — adequate and absence of alternative, — in passing judgment upon the truth of any event in history.

The existence of the Christian Church in that broadest sense, “the blessed company of all faithful people,”¹ divided though they miserably be on minor points, but one nevertheless in the common faith in the Person of the Risen Christ, one in the common hope of His ultimate victory, one in the common love for His Person, prompting activities of love to mankind for His Name’s sake, which activities, unceasing from the beginning, would at any moment, and above all now, fall with a crash to the ground could it be believed that Christ had not risen; such a fact, such a Church, continuous through all after time in motive and in act, is a clearer and a nearer light than even the written Gospels. No criticism, higher or textual, can impeach its existence or its meaning. Through the ocean of human story it flows on, like the Gulf Stream through the Atlantic; the waters seem the same, but the current has a power and an aim which are distinct and all its own. After every deduction for human frailties, the Church is, as is the mighty river

¹ Post-Communion Prayer (Prayer Book).

in the sea, in the world, not of the world; possessing its own purpose, its own motive, its own life; sustained evermore by the mysterious source from whence it is drawn — “the working of God’s mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead.”¹

But conviction inspired by this twofold consideration by no means dismisses lightly, or as merely cumulative, the detailed accounts given in the Gospels. These derive greater consequence, as historical evidence, from considerations too often neglected; a neglect the more singular because these considerations gain manifold from the modern critical attitude towards the New Testament writings. It is claimed that these writings are to be subjected to the same tests and sifted with the same thoroughness as any other documents, the possession of which we confessedly owe to human instrumentality. The candid Christian cannot but admit instantly the correctness of this claim on the part of the earnest inquirer. Not until doubt has ended in acceptance, in the confession that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, do these writings acquire to the man that further force which contemporaries recognized in the Master. He spoke as one having authority;² as one whose “I” dominated hesitation, refuted doubt, and compelled allegiance.³ In due measure the like quality passes into the recorded words of those whom He “sent, as the Father sent

¹ Ephesians, i, 19, 20.

² St. Matthew, vii, 28, 29.

³ *Ibid.*, v, 21, 22, 27, 28, 31, 32, 33, 34, 38, 39, 43, 44. St. John, vii, 46.

Me.”¹ They also have authority, they command, — after acceptance of the Resurrection, but not before.

But this reasonable and admitted claim to criticize carries with it consequences not sufficiently heeded. Were the very words of the documents dictated immediately by an infallible witness, to whom the human writer served only the purpose of a pen, we should expect and must find a record corresponding to the qualities of the presumed Author; absolute coherence, entire freedom from error and contradiction. The Master told the disciples that the Old Testament Scriptures testified of Him, and reproached them with the dullness that failed to discern that witness,² which they and we now can see after that He has opened our eyes. The New Testament evidently likewise so testifies of Him; on its very face it bears that reason for its composition, and it bears no other. But the writers once and again themselves admit, though incidentally and without parade of fact, that they have followed customary human methods in the collection of data, or in the expression of opinion; in short, that they are open to criticism. Under these circumstances, imperfect and apparently conflicting statements, such as are found in the narratives of the Resurrection, are not indeed better for such imperfection, but they are consistent with, and bear the stamp of, all human experience of honest evidence, let the thing witnessed to be what it may.

¹ St. John, xvii, 18; xx, 21-23. St. Matthew, xxviii, 19, 20. Acts, ix, 15, 16. Galatians, i, 11-17; ii, 1, 2, 6-9.

² St. Luke, xxiv, 25-27, 44-48. St. John, v, 39, 46, 47.

Hence, the inference is fair that the evidence has not been tampered with, but given to the best of the writer's ability. It has not been made to undergo the digestive process called harmonizing,—a process perfectly correct and admirable, provided it does not deal in suppression or perversion of inconvenient fact or statement. But while the witnesses thus collated vary among themselves in details, which may not always be capable of easy reconciliation with one another, they agree upon the central fact that the Lord had risen again and was seen by His disciples. Within this category of proof, though external to the four Gospels, and therefore an additional corroboration, should here be mentioned St. Paul's summary of the eye-witness yet available when he wrote: "He was seen of Peter; then of the Twelve; after that He was seen of above five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain unto this present; afterwards He was seen of James; then of all the Apostles. Last of all He was seen of me also." ¹

One hesitates here to pass over, undeveloped, the chain of assurance reported in the speeches of St. Peter and St. Paul in the Book of the Acts; ² still more the continually recurrent evidence throughout the epistles of St. Paul that the truth of the Resurrection underlay all his thought and all his teaching; that his whole career of self-sacrifice rested on that one certainty. The conversion of St. Paul, having in view the character and antecedents of the man,—his heredity and environment,—is the nearest

¹ 1 Corinthians, xv, 5-8. ² *Ante*, p. 34; foot-note.

approach that Western civilization presents to the conversion of a high-caste Brahman of mature years; an absolute surrender of the most cherished traditions, of the most intensely prized class distinction and privilege, of social and religious sympathies. It rested on the certainty that he had himself seen the risen Christ; a certainty confirmed to him by the testimony, just cited, of numerous others who also had so seen Him on other occasions.

A developed treatise on Christian evidence is not my theme; nor am I fitted for it by scope of knowledge, or by antecedents. What I seek is to establish, by suggestion, a reasonable assurance for a practical step, for men such as I myself am. The great mass of men must, like myself, confess that for one reason or another, training or occupation, we are not fitted here to sit in the seat of the teacher. But all, again like myself, must determine whether they will accept or reject Christ.

I have a life with Christ to live;
But, ere I live it, must I wait
Till learning can clear answer give
Of this or that book's date?

I have a life in Christ to live;
I have a death in Christ to die;
And must I wait till science give
All doubts a full reply? ¹

There is no middle path. Non-acceptance is rejection. He that is not with Me is against Me.²

¹ John Campbell Shairp. One could wish that the author, instead of "must I wait," had written "dare I wait."

² St. Matthew, xii, 30. St. Luke, xi, 23.

True, He said also, He that is not against Me is with Me;¹ but this "not against" was not a neutral but a positive attitude, that the man will not withstand Christ; and the man who will not resist will by Christ be taken into possession. The Christian scheme provides no place for neutrals, for them who are neither hot nor cold.²

The attempt here has been to bring the decision concerning accepting Christ as Master and Lord, with all the change of heart, life, and conduct therein implied, — upon which acceptance depends the Life of the Christian, — into line with the decisions we all continually have to make in life; decisions based upon knowledge which falls short of demonstration, upon a weighing of conditions, some of which are known, while others can only be estimated, perhaps even only surmised. That all men repeatedly so act, and are compelled so to act, in the management of temporal affairs, is a fact of experience too common for insistence. A sufficient reason for leaving some of the elements of the Christian decision so far in doubt is to be found in the necessity of leaving man's will substantially free to make or to refuse the moral choice. Much is assured. The loftiness of the Christian standard, exemplified in Christ, and that He promises attainment to His followers, is admitted. The main incidents of His life, teaching, and death are as certain as any other historic facts. The general record of the teaching of the Apostles, that they proclaimed that Christ is the Son of God, with Power, witnessed by the Resurrection from the dead, of

¹ St. Mark, ix, 38-41.

² Revelation, iii, 15, 16.

which resurrection they were eye-witnesses, is equally certain. That the letters of St. Paul breathe the Resurrection throughout, as a fact demonstrated to him by ocular evidence and confirmed to him by the testimony of others; that upon it he, a contemporary, threw to the winds a cherished past, and counted all of it, and all other things present and to come, “as dung if he might but win Christ,” is manifest. It is likewise evident that, in each of the eighteen centuries that have elapsed since Christ’s death, thousands of men and women — “a great multitude which no man can number, of all peoples, kindreds, nations, and tongues,” have done the same for His Name, in the faith of His Resurrection, and are so doing at this day. This also is matter of history to any who will inquire. That no other explanation worthy of the name historical exists to account for the change which passed over the Apostles from Friday to Sunday — a change only less extraordinary than the Resurrection itself — this too is sure. The Resurrection alone is only so far certain as this cumulative historical testimony may make it to those who cannot be eye-witnesses. Having in view the promise, of a perfect spiritual nature to be wrought in man, — nay, also, of the redemption of the body from the bondage of corruption,¹ — with the peace and joy naturally ensuant upon such a new nature, the matter for decision is whether the evidence is sufficient to justify the attempt.

This on the side of Self; and the Gospel of Jesus Christ, in its simple and unaffected recognition of

¹ Romans, viii, 18-25; vii, 24, 25. 1 Corinthians, xv, 42, 43.

man's nature as God has constituted it, makes no pretentious claim to an altruism which places Self wholly out of court. The Lord Jesus, intending the most sublime self-sacrifice that heroic love has ever made, did not disdain the appeal to His hearers: What shall it profit a man? ¹ Jesus Christ Himself "for the joy that was set before Him endured the Cross, despising the shame." ² But what was the joy set before Him? What "the joy of his Lord" into which also shall enter "the good and faithful servants"? ³ To accomplish the Father's will; to redeem His brethren, mankind. "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work." ⁴ "And this is the will of Him Who sent Me, that every one that beholdeth the Son and believeth on Him should have eternal life; that of all which He hath given Me I should lose nothing." ⁵ "He shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied. By knowledge of Himself shall my righteous Servant make many righteous; for He shall bear their iniquities." ⁶ But all the same, the Gospel does point Self ever to that its noblest fulfilment, nay, its sole *ful-*filment — in Another. The exquisite attraction of the Message is that it holds up before us such a Person as Jesus Christ to love, fulfilling thereby the final demand of pure human nature to find its only possible satisfaction in loving One worthy; thus meeting

¹ St. Matthew, xvi, 24-27. St. Mark, viii, 34-38. St. Luke, ix, 21-26.

² Hebrews, xii, 1, 2. ³ St. Matthew, xxv, 21-23.

⁴ St. John, iv, 32-34; v, 30; vi, 38. St. Matthew, xxvi, 39, 42; xi, 25-27. St. Luke, x, 21.

⁵ St. John, vi, 39, 40. ⁶ Isaiah, liii, 10-12 (Revised V.).

the passion to adore, the loftiest and mightiest affection latent in humanity.

“I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me.”¹ And so Christ Crucified, lifted up upon the Cross, is the Christ perfected for the worship of man. The human death of Christ excludes — not from memory, veneration, or imitation, but — from rivalry, even His human life, which it completes, fulfils, crowns. It is the ultimate expression of a love which commands allegiance and enables return. I determined to know nothing among you, says St. Paul, save Jesus Christ, *and Him crucified*.² As the life of obedience, begun, perhaps, in anxiety about self — What shall it profit? — proceeds in communion by the appointed means, gradually, step by step, unperceived as is many a radical change while in progress, the lawful appeal to self-interest fades away like a night vision. The lower motives of this temporal life, or of heaven, or of hell, drop out of sight. Little by little the Cross rises from the earth, and the Person of the Crucified, lifted up to the eyes of the believer above contact with that which stands for this present world, concentrates devotion upon Himself. That we may in time render to Him, in utmost measure, that which He has given for us, our all in return for His all, becomes the hope for which we can wait in patience, however arduous and gradual the fulfilment.³ To please Him, to be found in Him, having the righteousness which is not our own⁴ but His, abiding within us and upon us,

¹ St. John, xii, 24-26, 32, 33.

² 1 Corinthians, ii, 1-6.

³ Romans, viii, 24, 25.

⁴ Philippians, iii, 9.

even as the Life of the Christian is not his own, but the Life of Jesus Christ abiding in Him, character transformed ¹ by the power of His Life and Resurrection, — to attain all this becomes the motive of the Christian's life. We have known Christ after the flesh; we shall know Him so no more. Old things have passed away; all things are become new.²

In these words of St. Paul ring out again his triumphant cry concerning the resurrection of man: Sown in weakness, raised in power. The early stirrings of self-interest, the hesitating choice, the dim starlight of faith, feeble in themselves, yet bear within them the immortal quality of the Life from which they spring. In virtue of that Life they work upward, as does a sown seed, until they issue in the fullness of the harvest. The faint streaks of dawn lead on to the rising of the Sun of Righteousness,³ to the love for the Christ, to the assurance of the Spirit.⁴ Thus is verified afresh the Master's saying, "Except a grain of wheat fall into the earth, and die, it abideth by itself alone; but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit."⁵ The fact of His Resurrection, realized once for all in history, is realized again in the spiritual life of the Christian, as it already has been by his faith; and as it shall be hereafter in his mortal body, which shall rise again ⁶ as did that of Christ.

¹ Romans, xii, 2.

² 2 Corinthians, v, 16, 17.

³ Malachi, iv, 2. St. Luke, i, 78. Ephesians, v, 14. 2 St. Peter, i, 19.

⁴ Romans, viii, 14-17. Galatians, iv, 6. 1 St. John, v, 10.

⁵ St. John, xii, 24.

⁶ 1 Corinthians, xv, 12-19. 1 Thessalonians, iv, 13-17.

CHAPTER II

LIKENESS

THE Resurrection of Jesus Christ is chief among the evidence for His claims upon us, upon our acceptance of His Mission; for thereby He is declared to be the Son of God with Power.¹ But this function of evidence is not the only, nor the principal, relation of His Resurrection to the Life of the Christian. The first necessary thing in drawing near to God is to believe; and evidence therefore is first in order, but not consequently first in importance. Love is greater than Faith;² and as the Life of God is love, so the derived life of the Christian is also love.

The Power that worketh in us to this end, of love perfected, is the self-same Power which raised up Christ from the dead. Thus St. Paul writes to his converts: I pray unceasingly for you, that God may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in Him; that ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the greatness of His Power towards us who believe, according to the working of that mighty Power which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, . . . and put all things in subjection under His feet.³ And again, That I may

¹ Romans, i, 4. Acts, xiii, 32, 33; xvii, 31; xxvi, 23.

² 1 Corinthians, xiii, 13.

³ Ephesians, i, 16-20.

know Him and the Power of His Resurrection.¹ To us, therefore, the Power which raised Christ from the dead is the same that will work in us, if we will, and will put all things under our feet, by conforming our characters to that of Him, "Whom to serve is to reign."² Likeness to Him is the promise to us.³

Conformity is the reflection of love. We all, says St. Paul, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image.⁴ That ye be likeminded, of the same mind,⁵ is his frequent exhortation to his converts; for such a state is the expression of a common love for the one Master. Thus, also, in each successive act of the Creation,⁶ it is said that God pronounced it "good," — that is, conformed to the Will of the Creator; while of the crowning of the creative work, it is affirmed that God created man in His own image.⁷ He thus expressed His love to man

¹ Philippians, iii, 10.

² Collect for Peace, Morning Prayer: "Whose service is perfect freedom" is a paraphrase of the Latin original, "Whom to serve is to reign."

³ St. Matthew, x, 25. St. Luke, vi, 40. Ephesians, iv, 13-16. I St. John, iii, 1, 2.

⁴ 2 Corinthians, iii, 18. Compare Romans, xii, 2.

⁵ Romans, xii, 16; xv, 5. I Corinthians, i, 10. 2 Corinthians, xiii, 11. Ephesians, iv, 1-3. Philippians, i, 27; ii, 2; iii, 15-17; iv, 2. I St. Peter, iii, 8.

⁶ Genesis, i. It may conduce to clear thinking to recall that Creation, the bringing the Universe into being, from nothing, differs in idea as in reality from the successive modifications of matter, also loosely styled creation, through which, by whatever name described, that which was without form, and void, has progressed or evolved to present conditions.

⁷ Genesis, i, 26, 27.

by the highest gift that a creature can receive. As man in turn learns truly to love God, he necessarily seeks to be conformed to God, by following the example and teaching of Jesus Christ, the one perfect Man, Who is to us the revelation of God's character, and of what He wills us to be. God has predestined us, who so desire, to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren.¹ Everyone that is perfect shall be as his Master.² In the creature, the characteristic which works towards such conformity is Obedience. "If a man love Me, he will keep my words."³ As creation was the expression of God's life and love, so obedience in outward act is the expression of the hidden Life of the Christian, and of the love to the Creator, and to His creation, in which that life manifests itself. The essence of obedience being in the will, it is less an outward act than a living principle.

Hence, consideration of the Life of the Christian may not be limited merely to its source, and its abiding dependence, which were the leading theme of the preceding chapter. It is necessary also to dwell upon its characteristics; upon the powers, faculties, qualities, which are the attributes of the inward Life itself, and in which likeness to its Original will be traced. We must consider likewise the outward manifestations of these in conduct, and in observance of the ordinances commanded by God; of the sacraments, prayer, communion with

¹ Romans, viii, 29.

² St. Luke, vi, 40.

³ St. John, xiv, 15, 23, 24.

God in His Word, the assembling ourselves together for the united worship upon which our Lord has pronounced the peculiar blessing of His Own immediate presence.¹ These are acts of obedience, the word which in itself sums up the spiritual purpose by which man draws near to God, in the truest sense of increasing conformity to His Being and His Will.

The wilful absence of any of these outward marks of spiritual character is symptomatic of an imperfect obedience, of an inward disease, perverting the will. This it is which is so ominous in the disposition of many in our day to forsake "the assembling of ourselves together"² in the houses of God; a disposition which carries with it the neglect of the sacraments of life. Not merely does this ignore a commonplace of human experience, that all good purposes and works are forwarded by meeting together for a common object, inciting and confirming one another; but in its neglect of Christ's teaching and example, and of all Christian tradition, it is a symptom of obedience sapped by self-pleasing, of wilful nonconformity to the likeness of Christ, Who frequented habitually both temple and synagogue.³ How thus shall we draw nigh to God?

¹ St. Matthew, xviii, 19, 20.

² Hebrews, x, 25. The whole passage is worth quoting, because it embraces the *rationale* of all public assemblies: Let us hold fast the confession of our hope, that it waver not; and let us consider one another, to provoke unto love and good works. Not forsaking our own assembling together, as the custom of some is, but exhorting one another, and so much the more, as ye see the day drawing nigh.

³ St. Luke, iv, 16.

Indeed, in these outward observances is found the first and the easiest exercise of obedience; and, because easiest, therefore that which it is most culpable to withhold. The perfect conformity of the spirit which brings every thought into captivity to Christ¹ is the result only of a long discipline. Even of the Christ Himself, Who was without sin, it is written that, though a Son, He learned obedience by the things which He suffered; and, though already spotless in His human nature, was thus made perfect.² So we find in the Gospel accounts of the supreme test of obedience, obedient unto death,³ in the closing days of His humiliation, the distinct marks of progress, from perfection to perfection, as star differs from star in glory.

For, in the effort to conform the will of man to the purpose of God, those who have had to undergo great trial, or have reflected upon the question of temptation, or trial, in general, will have no difficulty in recognizing three stages. There is, first, submission, in which the will gets no further than "putting itself under" the Will of God; willing, yes; but feeling, though repressing, the contrary human impulse, the shrinking from suffering which is inseparable from human nature. This finds expression in the first entreaty of Jesus Christ in Gethsemane:

¹ 2 Corinthians, x, 5.

² Hebrews, v, 7-9. Dean Goulburn, in his "Thoughts on Personal Religion," uses here an apt simile. A flawless block of marble is perfect in the sense of being without defect; but it becomes perfect in quite another sense when, under the discipline of the chisel, it realizes the thought of the sculptor.

³ Philippians, ii, 8.

“My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass away from Me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt.”¹ Then the will, if it remain constant, advances inevitably to acquiescence. The contrary impulse, to recoil, disappears; the spirit lies *quiet* — the root idea of acquiescence — under God’s dealing with it. So the humanity of our Lord in its faithful struggle advances in perfect conformity. In the interval between His first and second petitions the “let this cup pass from Me” drops away. “My Father, if this cannot pass away from Me, except I drink it, Thy Will be done.”²

“O Lord, my God, do Thou Thy Holy Will!
 I will lie still.
 I will not stir, lest I forsake Thine arm,
 And break the charm
 Which lulls me, clinging to my Father’s breast,
 In perfect rest.”

The highest perfection this, I have somewhere read, to which the human spirit can attain. Yet, having before us our Lord’s experience, there is clearly a further reach, which has been realized not by Him only, though by Him supremely, but by many of His followers;³ in their measure thus made like unto Him. Later, in that night of spiritual struggle and spiritual victory, we read, “Jesus, knowing all things that were coming upon Him, went forth.”⁴ “Arise, let us be going; he that betrayeth Me is at hand.”⁵ For what purpose? Himself to take, by

¹ St. Matthew, xxvi, 37-39.

² *Ibid.*, xxvi, 42.

³ Hebrews, ii, 10-13.

⁴ St. John, xviii, 4.

⁵ St. Matthew, xxvi, 46.

His own free act, with His own hand, the cup offered to Him. This is acceptance, the active exercise of the will, transcending the passive. By His own voluntary act He "takes to" Himself—which is what acceptance means—all of doing and of suffering which "the cup" signified to Him. What that full significance was we do not know; but, whatever it was, we do see that the embracing it was no longer the Father's will only, but the human will also of the Sufferer Himself. No more is it simply "Thou wilt"; it has become "I will." The human will, which throughout temptation has suffered, though without flinching, no longer submits only, no longer lies quiet only, but rises to perfect conformity, to perfect oneness, with the Divine. The Lord Jesus has learned spiritual obedience to its uttermost, and so is made perfect.

It is expedient to note that this perfect spiritual obedience, this acceptance, is to be traced at earlier, but less urgent, stages of our Lord's human career; for we are not to think of the incidents in the garden as being, in this respect, more than the full development, under extreme trial, of that which existed in Him all along. Being tried, He suffered;¹ and in Gethsemane suffered supremely because of the near approach, possibly the actual beginning, of the spiritual agony in which His life of sorrows culminated. But, while this end was still relatively distant, and He in comparative safety, we read: When the time came that He should be received up, He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem.² That is, of His

¹ Hebrews, ii, 17, 18; iv, 14-16.

² St. Luke, ix, 51.

own will and act He accepted the doom He foresaw, and went forward to meet it.¹ A similar indication of will exerted actively is found in His power, and refusal, to summon angels to deliver Him;² with which collate the refusals of the Temptation in the Wilderness.³

Nothing is ever lost, or can be lost, really, to a will that thus gives itself to God. The material loss, — of a person dear, or of something valued, — the hard hit to the affections or to the circumstances, may be beyond the man's power to prevent; but in the truest and highest sense of possession, in ability to surrender to God, nothing can take them away. However irretrievably gone materially, the will, by loving acceptance of the fact, retains the power to lay them before God's throne, freely dedicated to Him, — consecrated. So they remain the man's in the truest sense; treasures in Heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, nor death bereave, nor thieves break through nor steal.⁴ There he shall find them.

In these successive stages of conformity, it is not merely fanciful to see, in a figure, the Resurrection itself. In submission, the human will has died — unto itself — like the grain of wheat cast into the earth.⁵ Like the sown seed, and the buried body, it lies quietly, in the intermediate stage of seeming passivity, and in acceptance has risen again to the

¹ St. Matthew, xvi, 21. St. Mark, x, 32-34.

² St. Matthew, xxvi, 53, 54.

³ *Ibid.*, iv. Also, St. John, xii, 27, 28.

⁴ St. Matthew, vi, 19-21. Compare *Ibid.*, x, 39; xvi, 25.

⁵ St. John, xii, 24, 25.

glory and abundance of the harvest, to the possession of itself in that fullness of power, and of conformity to the Will of the Creator, in which consists the glorious liberty of the sons of God.¹ Sown in weakness, raised in power.²

From this illustration in the Life of the Lord Himself, that which in any case would be antecedently probable may be assumed as certain: that the obedience of the Christian, like all manifestations of created life known to us, will have beginning, growth, and only ultimate fullness. Nor is it uninformative to remark that the healthy progress of the natural man depends upon the practice of obedience. Obedience in the child is the first stage in wholesome development; and, as life advances, obedience to the laws of right and of nature, by which the man is surrounded, is the unavoidable condition for reaching the utmost of accomplishment permitted by his natural faculties. But to do this happily, as well as successfully, conformity must be that of the accordant will, not merely of sullen act.

It may be noted also, as an expression of the mind of Christ, that the first three clauses of that Prayer, which by preëminence we call the Lord's, correspond to these successive stages in His progress to a perfected obedience.

1. Hallowed be Thy Name. God's Name is the expression of His Being and of His Will. In the Lord's Prayer the particular expression of that Being and that Will is in the address, "Our Father."

¹ Romans, viii, 21.

² 1 Corinthians, xv, 43.

So the Son, by His first petition in Gethsemane, "O my Father," etc., expresses filial submission to the Will of Him Whom He has named Father. His human will hallows the Name, Father, by submitting to the paternal command piously,¹ and therefore faultlessly; but it is still reluctant to the suffering. It obeys, not yet because in the highest sense accordant, but because it thus hallows the Name, Father.²

2. Thy Kingdom come. The Kingdom of God may come in manifestation outward or inward; but it is fulfilled only when God is completely enthroned in the will of the creature. Such complete enthronement implies more than submission, as the rule over willing subjects is mightier than that over those whose wills are coerced, even though it be by themselves. Hence the Kingdom of the Father comes in fullness only when the human will has progressed from submission to accord. It is no longer reluctant. This, as has been seen, is the case in the second petition of Gethsemane, in which the instinct of recoil is stilled, and God's Kingdom has come in power, because with full acquiescence.

3. Thy Will be done on earth, as it is in Heaven. It seems scarcely necessary to insist that the "doing" of the Father's Will means something more than

¹ I have used the word "pious" in its strict, but almost disused sense of reverence and affection for a parent. In the Epistle to the Hebrews (v, 7), the King James version reads (marginal) that "He was heard for his piety." The Revised Version reads "for His godly fear." The two are equivalent, provided, in the second, due emphasis is laid on "godly."

² Collate with St. Matthew, xxvi, 38-42. St. John, xii, 27, 28.

mere acquiescence, however perfect. "To do" is active. But should any doubt remain, in that the precise words "Thy Will be done" were used by our Lord in the garden to express, first, submission, and, second, acquiescence, it will be removed by the qualifying clause, "As it is in Heaven." Whether this be understood of God Himself, or of the holy angels, or of both, the Will is "done" by action; as when our Lord, in His going forth to meet His enemies, by that act Himself took up the Cross, and did the Will. "My Father worketh even until now, and I work;"¹ while for the angels, "are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to do service?"²

For many centuries these three petitions of Jesus Christ have gone forth from the public worship of the Christian Church, and from Christian believers in the privacy of their closets, and how small at first thoughts seems the result! "Where is the promise of His coming"³ in the hearts and wills of men? Where is the conformity, where the obedience? How dim the likeness to the Master, even in the best! The inadequacy of the apparent reply to the volume of verbal prayer is to be attributed primarily to the feebleness, the unreality, the unexpectancy, of those who have used it; but it also may be that our unexpectancy, or, as Jesus Christ would call it, "unbelief," has not been on the lookout to note the evidences of answer where they are to be seen.

¹ St. John, v, 17.

² Hebrews, i, 14. Those familiar with the Bible will not need references for the many active missions committed to the angels.

³ 2 St. Peter, iii, 4.

The Name of God has been hallowed, is now hallowed, His Kingdom has already come, in large measure, in the reverence and recognition accorded to Jesus Christ, Who is the express Image of the invisible God.¹

Answer has come, in unbeliever as well as in believer. The words of John Stuart Mill, echoed by many a heart, "Nor, even now, would it be easy, even for an unbeliever, to find a better translation of the rule of virtue from the abstract to the concrete, than to endeavor so to live that Christ would approve our life,"² may fairly be considered by Christian faith as a response to the prayer, "Hallowed be Thy Name." For a name surely is hallowed, when such veneration to Him Who bears it is attributed by one who is at once an unbeliever in His Divine Nature, and yet representative of the lofty ideals of men of good will. The words quoted are the echo, distant and faint it may be, the reflection, real though dim, of His own phrases: I — My Person and My teaching — am the Way; I am the Truth; not, unhappily, of that further word of power to the believer, — I am the Life.³ To the Christian this hallowing of the name of Jesus Christ is the fulfilment, doubtless unconscious, of the full final step of hallowing the Name, the Being, of Him, of Whom the Lord Jesus is the brightness of His Glory, the express Image of His Person. "He that [thus] hath seen Me, hath [in like manner]

¹ Hebrews, i, 3. St. John, xii, 45; xiv, 7-11. Colossians, i, 15.

² Three Essays on Religion. New York, H. Holt and Co., 1878, pp. 254-5.

³ St. John, xiv, 6.

seen the Father.”¹ “He that confesseth the Son hath the Father also.”² We may hope that they who so hear and so follow are of “My sheep.”³

So likewise the prayer, “Thy Kingdom come,” is herein fulfilled; for this word of Mill’s expresses the dominion, the kingship, in the realm of morals, commonly conceded to Jesus Christ by men of lofty and righteous purpose. His authority is recognized freely, not only over men’s consciences, but over their reason, in that sphere where decision is made between right and wrong. His reason penetrated to the roots of human motive and conduct, and thence formulated for men the loftiest standards, which His life exemplified and imposed. Thus He entered into a Kingdom which is not only over the heart but over the intellect. The order of the petitions, and of the answers to them, is logical. 1. The hallowing of the Name, the recognition of excellence. 2. The coming of the Kingdom, the recognition of authority. 3. The doing of the Will, — not yet perfected. The blade, the ear, then the full corn in the ear;⁴ the harvest for which He and we still wait.

Another well-known name, of one once a believer in revelation, but who has since lost that faith, may be cited in recognition of the supreme moral excellence and intellectual originality of Jesus Christ. It is not too much to claim that the words to be quoted both hallow the Name of Jesus, and recognize in Him an authority at once boundless and endless.

¹ St. John, xiv, 7-9.

² 1 St. John, ii, 23.

³ St. John, x, 2-16.

⁴ St. Mark, iv, 26-29.

Goldwin Smith in a quite recent letter ¹ says: "My present conception of the historical relation of Christianity and its Founder to humanity and human progress does not seem to me to be so different from what it was half a century ago as, when I came to compare the two, I expected to find it. In those days I believed in revelation. But my argument [then] was not from revelation, but from ethics and history. The undertaking of Christianity [which is Christ] to convert mankind to a fraternal and purely beneficent type of character, and enfold men in a universal brotherhood, baffled and perverted although the effort has been in various ways, appears to have no parallel in ethical history. Nor does the Christian character, or the effort to create it, depart with belief in dogma."

This last sentence affirms the still existing influence of the character and teaching of Jesus Christ over men who do not accept His Divine Personality. The Christian may well doubt whether such influence would continue, merely through its appeal to the moral sense and to the intellect, if the Faith, on which the Master laid such stress, should depart wholly from the earth, surrendering thus the Power from above which is ministered to man through faith; whether, in short, the vitality of the Christian Church, as the leaven of the mass,² may not be essential to the undoubted influence of the Christian standard upon men of good will, who yet do not believe. None

¹ New York "Sun," January 20, 1907, "New Faith linked with the Old."

² St. Matthew, xiii, 33.

the less, the admission of this abiding influence is a demonstration that the Lord's Prayer, "Hallowed be Thy Name, Thy Kingdom come, Thy Will be done," echoed through the centuries by His followers, has not fallen wholly to the ground, even among those alien to His fold.

The words already quoted related to their writer's standpoint of to-day. The writing of a half-century before, which he alludes to, and cites, was in part as follows: "The type of character set forth in the Gospel history is an absolute embodiment of love, both in the way of action and affection, crowned by the highest possible exhibition of it in an act of the most transcendent self-devotion to the interest of the human race. This being the case, it is difficult to see how the Christian type of character can ever be left behind by the course of human development, lose the allegiance of the moral world, or give place to a newly emerging or higher type. This type, it would appear, being perfect, will be final. . . . In a moral point of view, in short, the world may abandon Christianity, but it never can advance beyond it. This conclusion is not a matter of authority, or even of revelation. If it is true, it is a matter of reason, as much as anything in the world." He then "went on to dwell on the freedom of the Christian type of character, as embodied in the Founder of Christianity, from peculiarities of nation, race, or sex, which might have derogated from its perfection as a type of pure humanity."

From the standpoint of the writer of these words, there is conceded to Jesus Christ a singular original-

ity in the realms both of morals and of intellect.¹ Of intellect, in that He conceived and taught such a standard of human excellence; of morals, in that He exemplified in His life and character, even to the utmost of self-sacrifice, the ideal which He set forth. This teaching and this example were realized in the midst of surroundings so far unfavorable as in no wise to account for them, and so to lessen the claim to originality. True, as He himself said, "He came to fulfil the law and the prophets"² — His predecessors; but the fulfilment appeared to the immediate hearers to be but destruction in another form.³ No deduction therefore need be made from His supremacy as original, which is but another way of expressing His dominion over character and thought; His excellence and His authority.

Moreover, this willing, nay, this enthusiastic, eulogy from an unbeliever in His Power and Godhead attributes to this dominion of Jesus Christ finality and universality. It adopts, though in other words, the profession of the Nicene Creed: "Of His Kingdom there shall be no end." Man, it is said, may progress indefinitely, but he cannot overpass the example and the teaching which are the standard of

¹ After writing this, and when verifying the quotation already made from J. S. Mill, I came across the following words, the corroboration by that distinguished thinker of the statement in the text. "About the life and sayings of Jesus there is a stamp of personal originality combined with profundity of insight which . . . must place the Prophet of Nazareth, even in the estimation of those who have no belief in his inspiration, in the very first rank of the men of sublime genius of whom our species can boast."

² St. Matthew, v, 17-19.

³ St. John, xi, 47-53. Acts, vi, 13-15.

Christ's Kingdom over the hearts and wills of men. "This can never lose the allegiance of the moral world." So, too, for universality, all mankind are embraced as possible subjects of the kingdom; able, if they will, to conform themselves to the standard, to be like Him. The words quoted, as to the freedom of Christ's character from national or racial peculiarities, gathering every type within its scope, echo the prophecy in Daniel; which, whatever its date, was surely anterior to Christ. "There was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed."¹ The Christian disciple in a later age adopts these words: "Worthy art Thou, for Thou wast slain, and didst purchase unto God with Thy Blood, . . . men of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation, and madest them to be unto our God a kingdom and priests."² According to the flesh, Jesus Christ was a Jew, and His own immediate mission to the Jews only;³ but He was also such that, in the new man, which He revealed by teaching and example, even in Himself, there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bondman, freeman, male or female:⁴ but Christ is all, and in all.⁵

The Name is surely hallowed, the Kingdom surely come, when even they, who see in the King

¹ Daniel, vii, 13, 14.

² Revelation, v, 9; vii, 9.

³ St. Matthew, xv, 24-26. Romans, xv, 8.

⁴ Galatians, iii, 28.

⁵ Colossians, iii, 11.

only a man like themselves, can speak as we have just read. But the children of the Kingdom, in profession at least, they that call themselves by the name of Christ, fail to appreciate not only such signs of His having received His own among those who by choice remain without, but also the abundant evidence in the Christian ranks of the many lives, the records of which, in likeness to His, are the manifestation that the Kingdom is come indeed in power. If Christian citizenship is in Heaven,¹ where, so to say, is Christian patriotism, that regard is paid only to the ignoble elements of our own lives and surroundings, or to the seeming failures of to-day, while there is neglect to note with exultation the great names and acts which illumine the past and the present; the history of the heavenly kingdom set up on earth for the saving of the peoples?

If the Epistles of St. Paul are read attentively, or the history of the early centuries studied, it is impossible to think that those times so differed from ours that the Church then had little or no cause to mourn for many professed believers who had sinned and not repented. Yet, now that those days have passed away, the glory that marked them is clearly seen. Doubtless, it is well that each generation, for its own humbling, keep its own shortcomings ever in mind; but humility is one thing, dejection another. The honor of the King demands the continual memory of the manifestations of His Power, in the holy lives and mighty deeds which have hallowed His Name, shown forth His Kingdom, carried out His

¹ Philippians, iii, 20.

Will. What earthly state drops out of mind its great names? Alfred of England, St. Louis of France, our own Washington and Lincoln, are but the most conspicuous in their several nations of the many heroes, to recount whom "time would fail," as said the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews concerning the champions of the Faith among his own people; ¹ whom the Church of Christ also claims as of His Kingdom and hers.

It was the very evils and miseries of their generation that brought into action the qualities of these men. Did they find in their times, or among their own countrymen, that general following, that faithful support, the failure to obtain which is freely cited as the dishonor of the Church of Christ now? Nay, when the full flower and perfect example of Christian life and character was here on earth, did He so draw in His train the "world" of His day? "The Light came into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light." ² "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not." ³ "How often would I have gathered thy children together, and ye would not!" ⁴

Again, with eye ranging down the future centuries to our own, the tender irony of Christ searches out one of the cheap delusions of to-day as to the winning of mankind to Him: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek Me, not because ye saw signs, but because ye ate of the loaves, *and were filled*." ⁵ It is good that men be filled, and healed; Christ filled them and

¹ Hebrews, xi, 32.

² St. John, iii, 19.

³ *Ibid.* i, 11.

⁴ St. Matthew, xxiii, 37.

⁵ St. John, vi, 26, 27.

healed them. These are marks attending His coming,¹ whether in Person, or in His Church, or in individual followers. They have never been lacking, least of all to-day. To take only one portion of the Mission Field, the Far East, Christian Missions, other than Roman Catholic, maintain in China, Japan, and Korea over 400 hospitals, which within the year have ministered to over a million sufferers. There are also over 3,000 educational establishments, with near 90,000 under tuition.² This is not matter for boasting; those most closely interested know too well how reproachfully short this provision falls of the urgent demand upon Christians to be up and doing in their Lord's Name. Nevertheless, in origin and practice these institutions are not for gain. They are the act of Christian benevolence, chiefly foreign, accessories to the principal motive of preaching Jesus Christ and His Kingdom; imitating herein the example of Him Who "went about teaching in the synagogues, preaching the Gospel of the

¹ St. Matthew, xi, 2-5. St. Luke, vii, 18-23.

² The exact figures, by the latest statistics available, are: Hospitals and dispensaries, 430; patients, 1,126,341. Educational institutions, from colleges to day schools, 3,301; pupils, 88,635. The Roman Catholic Missions would doubtless greatly increase these numbers. There is believed to be little or no foreign effort of similar character, except for the usual object of remuneration. The Japan Year Book for 1908-9, the editor of which is a non-Christian, says: It is a significant fact that by far the greater part of private charity work, of any large scope, is conducted by Christians, both natives and aliens; and that the part played by Buddhists in this direction is shamefully out of proportion to their number. As to Shintoists, they are privileged, in popular estimate, to keep aloof from matters of this kind.

Kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and of disease.”¹ But men brought to Christ simply as a means of bettering their state, who will follow the Church that they may be better warmed and filled, will turn again and rend her, as the Jews of His day crucified Christ, for all His mighty works.

This is no reason, indeed, that the Church should do one work of benevolence the less. As St. Bernard replied to the devil, who would have him stop preaching, lest he be made vain by his success, “I neither began for thee, neither will I cease because of thee.” The Church cares for the bodies of men, because Christ so gave her the example, — that she may be like Him; as ingratitude stopped not Him, neither may indifference deter her; but to expect the world to be converted by these means is futile. After the days of Constantine, when the Church had loaves to give, the world flocked to her, with the principal result of obscuring, under a chaos of selfishness, the selfless devotion which has never failed to exist within her, and which alone has kept her alive; for it has been the result of the Power of God in action, even as was Christ’s Resurrection from the dead.

In this hidden² Power, manifested in the multitudes of her believing children, faithful in heart and in effort, however far they have fallen short of perfection, the Church of God has from the beginning been to the Earth as salt,³ preserving, and with its flavor pervading the mass in which it rests concealed; energizing also, as leaven⁴ in a lump. With clear

¹ St. Matthew, iv, 23.

² Colossians, iii, 3, 4.

³ St. Matthew, v, 13.

⁴ *Ibid.*, xiii, 33.

recognition of all shortcoming, individual and corporate, there should ever be coupled, for God's glory and our own heartening, the remembrance of the glorious past and promising present. Could all the stars be blotted out from the firmament of heaven, and in the blank spaces left be set a like memorial for each departed faithful servant of Christ, the skies would recover their brilliancy; and we could conceive Almighty God again, as of old, leading the father of the faithful from his tent to the open night, saying, "Behold the fulfilment of the promise, 'So shall thy seed be;' as the stars of heaven for multitude, and as the sand by the seashore innumerable." ¹

The stars which Abraham with his unaided vision saw would not suffice for those who have laid down their lives for Him in Whom they believed; nor those which the telescope reveals for them who, likewise unseen, have followed with equal fidelity, though not to a martyr's death. The illustrious roll, the historic testimony, of those who have fallen in the forefront of this battle of the ages, stretches in long sequence from the deacon Stephen, who followed close upon his Master's footsteps in time, closer still in likeness. "Father, forgive them," the Leader; "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge," ² the follower's dying cry. In our own day, within fifty years, two at least of the leaders of the host, Bishops Patteson and Hannington, taking their lives in their hands, as did the Twelve and the Master, have met death in the islands of the Pacific, and in Africa,

¹ Genesis, xv, 5, 6; xxii, 17. Hebrew, xi, 8-12.

² Acts, vii, 59, 60.

from those whom they sought to win to Christ; and a decade has not passed since several Christian missionaries with thousands of their Chinese converts fell steadfast victims to their devotion to His service.

Truly, Christians have cause to be proud of their nation, and of its past. That past and this present are the night time of the Faith. The Sun of Righteousness ran His course and set upon the world; but we know that He shall rise again. Meantime, this generation has, not only above but around, these tokens of the fulfilment of His Word and Work, — the leading of His stars. There still are those who have borne, and are bearing, trial intolerable to the habits of civilization, harder than the momentary bitterness of death, except as sweetened by love; love to the Master and for His sake to His brethren.¹ There lives now, and for near ten years has lived, within the Arctic circle, at Point Hope, an American physician, latterly in deacon's orders, alone among the rude natives, and often disgusting surroundings incident to barbarous life in bitter cold. There has but lately passed away an English bishop, who, while a priest in his early thirties, was sent, on his own volunteering, to the same peoples in Arctic Canada. His correspondence tells, rarely and uncomplainingly, of what the refined white man had to undergo; but for forty years — "unto the end — he endured," dying among the people he had come to love, at the last not for Christ's sake only, as men love those whom they have helped; helped not merely

¹ St. Matthew, xxv, 40. St. Mark, iii, 33-35. St. John, xx, 17. Hebrews, ii, 11-18.

spiritually, though that first, but, again like the Master, they, as do missionaries in all parts, carried with the message of the Kingdom and the King the teaching and the healing with which He in the olden time went about in Galilee.¹

“We count them happy which endured.”² The judgment is that of Christianity, of Christ;³ not of the world. Yet how true it is. We connect the name of Washington with Boston, Trenton, Yorktown; we speak with vague approval of “the times that tried men’s souls,” having that taking phrase coined ready to our use. But was not Washington greater, nobler, when holding together his beaten, ragged, shoeless, dirty army through that bitter, squalid winter at Valley Forge than when he received the sword of Cornwallis? Were not his troops more illustrious in those months of endurance than when their surrendered opponents filed out before them and laid down their arms? Doubtless, many men for diverse motives have willingly endured manifold sufferings; but the distinguishing mark in the self-devotion above cited, which exceeds even the high type of self sacrifice for one’s own country,—for, after all, that is one’s own,—is that it has been exercised for others: for Christ, to make Him known to those for whom He died, and to bring to them the relief of His civilization.

These, however, are but more eminent instances of a self-sacrificing devotion to the spread of the

¹ St. Matthew, iv, 23.

² St. James, v, 11. 1 St. Peter, iii, 14; iv, 12-14.

³ St. Matthew, v, 10-12; x, 22; xxiv, 13.

Gospel, which is in daily continuous action by ever-increasing numbers; in endurance like to their Exemplar. They are not merely instances, but illustrations, which can be multiplied, of that which is called the missionary spirit, of likeness realized to Christ, the first missionary; Who was "sent," as He in turn "sent" the Twelve and St. Paul,¹ and by His lasting commission² has been "sending" His servants even until now. In emptying Himself of His Divine Glory, taking upon Him the form of a servant,³ He set the example which they in their measure have striven to follow, emptying themselves of most that men count dear, that in so doing they may be like Him. To us, who have seen these fulfilments of the promise to Abraham, the meaning is that of the firmament itself, — All these things hath My hand made.⁴ As the celestial universe bears witness to the Power behind it, so these lives, patterned consciously upon that of Jesus Christ, testify to the inward working of the Power of Him who died and rose again.

Nor is it in such conspicuous manner only that the power of God and of Christ is manifested, — to the believer. Who among us, who has sought himself to pattern his life upon Christ's example, has not known many another, whom the world knew not, in whom could be clearly seen the working of that Power which is the Life of the Christian? The glory of God, and of the Kingdom, is shown as truly in such

¹ St. John, xx, 21. Acts, ix, 15, 16; xxii, 21; xxvi, 15-18.

² St. Matthew, xxviii, 18-20.

³ Philippians, ii, 5-8.

⁴ Isaiah, xl, 26; li, 6; lxvi, 1, 2; Acts, vii, 49, 50.

as in the deeds of the noble army of martyrs. But to recognize them one must be, in some part at least, "not of the world."¹ Whether it be a simple want of sympathy, of common aims and feelings, or whether it be lack of the spiritual gift to the "new man, which after God is created in Christ Jesus,"² it remains that the world does not recognize these followers of Christ, because it knows not Him.³ They are there in abundance, evidences of the Life of the Christian, of the Power that worketh; but to note them there must be likeness, the seeing eye of sympathy. The promise, "When He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is,"⁴ is a statement of correlatives; if vision promotes likeness, likeness enables vision. If in measure like Him, we shall recognize Him, whenever and however He comes. Accordingly, Jesus Christ said to a group of men, who were listening to Him attentively: "Why do ye not understand My speech? Because *ye cannot hear My Word*. . . . He that is of God *heareth* the words of God: for this cause *ye hear them not*, because ye are not of God."⁵ For perception there must be an inward correspondence; otherwise, "seeing, ye will not perceive, and hearing ye will not understand."⁶

The attitude towards Christ, the appreciation which a man gives to Christ Himself, the same — not other — will he give to those who are Christ's.⁷

¹ St. John, xv, 19-24; xvii, 14-16.

² Ephesians, ii, 9, 10; iv, 23, 24. Colossians, iii, 9, 10.

³ 1 St. John, iii, 1. ⁴ *Ibid.*, iii, 2. 2 Corinthians, iv, 3-6.

⁵ St. John, viii, 43-47.

⁶ Isaiah, vi, 9, 10. St. Matthew, xiii, 13. ⁷ St. John, xv, 17-21.

If he sees in Christ nothing which compels his allegiance, he naturally cannot appreciate the inferior degrees of excellence, in those who, whether near or far, in obscurity or in the bright glare of conspicuous achievement, are following in the Master's footsteps. So Goldwin Smith, in the letter before cited, appreciating the moral excellence of Christ, sees that "the efforts to realize His character, being carried on under all the various moral and intellectual conditions attaching to particular men, will produce an infinite variety of characters, personal and national; ranging from the highest human grandeur down to the very verge of the grotesque." The recognition of moral excellence carries the recognition of the moral results in other men; but, revelation being rejected, there can be of course no appreciation of the Divine Power in Christ, and consequently none of its working in those who are Christ's.

Unless we keep in mind the attitude of the world of His day towards Christ, it would be surprising how far blindness towards present conditions can go. Many decades ago, Guizot, in his lectures on the History of Civilization, thought necessary to caution his hearers and readers against depreciation, and even skepticism, on the subject of disinterestedness. In this connection he cited the quixotic — as it would appear to many — mission of St. Boniface to the Frisian pagans, who rewarded his devotion by knocking him on the head. The wisdom of this world will see herein only the folly of preaching; not knowing Christ, it cannot commend the self-sacrifice of His servant. Commonplace though the remark may be,

if we would accurately measure the significance of the world's continuous attitude towards Christianity, we must remember that nothing is narrower than self-interest, nothing blinder than lack of sympathy. Nowhere is missionary effort more bitterly antagonized than by nominal Christians in missionary fields; from none comes more enthusiastic endorsement than from those who, though not missionaries, have watched the work, having themselves the mind of Christ. I remember once, mentioning the life and martyrdom of Bishop Patteson, a bystander ejaculated, "What a shocking waste of a man's life!" Doubtless, he would have said the same of Boniface, and of Christ Himself, in His day. Yet the story of the Pacific Islands vindicates the disciple and his fellow-workers, as the history of Europe does their Lord.

Max Müller, as a student of Comparative Religion, has said that the mark of a living religion is its missionary spirit. Certainly it is true that any system of thought which has life must seek to propagate itself; be dynamic, not merely static; and so missionary effort indicates life in the body. The rapidly increasing volume of such effort put forth by Christianity, and the bitterness of antagonism excited, less among the heathen than in Christian lands, alike testify to the working of inward motives and of hidden powers, on the one hand and on the other. The battle between Christ and the rulers of the darkness of this world¹ increases in intensity.

¹ St. Luke, xxii, 53. St. John, xii, 31, 32; xiv, 30; xvi, 11. Ephesians, vi, 10-20. Colossians, ii, 15.

Whatever may be said of the general Christian motive, it cannot by candid men be ascribed to self-interest, narrowly interpreted. At worst, it is the propaganda of a strong conviction; but of that conviction the only account is the Cross and Resurrection of Jesus Christ; His Person and His Mission. As it was in the beginnings, so is it now; Jesus Christ, Him crucified and risen again, is both message and motive. The first Apostles preached Jesus and the Resurrection:¹ the Personality and Mission, implied in the Name, and the fact and meaning of the Resurrection. The two comprise the summary of Christian teaching: on the moral side, the Person, the object of love; on the intellectual, the Resurrection, as the evidence.

To the believer, of course, the growing activity is proof of the working of His Power, which wrought in the Resurrection itself. But this present working has brought prominently to light a very extraordinary feature in the history of Christianity; one that should, and possibly may, convince the world by the means which the Lord prayed.² The aroused purpose to spread the Kingdom of Christ has brought Christian men to realize, as never before, how truly they are one in all the great essentials of the Faith. If, formally, the Body of Christ shows divisions, upon lines which, however important otherwise, are clearly secondary; if, in a formal sense, we are debarred from the Apostle's assertion, "there is one Body;" we none the less can take up exultingly the

¹ Acts, iii, 13-16; iv, 2, 10-12; xvii, 18.

² St. John, xvii, 20, 21.

remainder of his cry: One spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of all.¹

This recognition of unity is the direct outcome of the mission field, where indeed, under the pressure of the surroundings, it has been found in the fullest measure. In the methods of missionary work the likeness to Christ is most apparent, because the work itself is most like His own: the carrying of a message new to those who hear it. As He Himself was the first of Christian Missionaries, "sent" by the Father; as He Himself "sent" the Twelve into all the world with a commission enduring to the end of time; so the corporate missionary work of the Christian Church embodies all those activities which were most preëminently His, — preaching, teaching, healing. The Church the Body, He the Head.² Missions have been to the Church what the colonies and India have been to Great Britain; the outward effort has reacted on the mother countries in broadening vision and quickening enterprise. The harm and folly of divisions, too easily accepted at home as a state of things neither remediable nor entirely evil, became glaringly manifest in the face of those to whom the missionary was sent as to enemies; as Christ went to enemies, to win them to Himself.³

The mission field is the forefront of the battle; there it is necessary that the war-cry be one, that men speak with one tongue, and behold! they can. The formal divisions, it is true, remain, and on the

¹ Ephesians, iv, 3-6.

² *Ibid.*, i, 22, 23.

³ Romans, v, 8-10. Ephesians, ii, 1-5. Colossians, i, 21, 22.

old lines. Men must continue to hold truth as it is given them to see it; but they speak it increasingly "in love,"¹ the phrase of St. Paul's which contains the ultimate solution of our difficulties on this score. Hoping for a fuller visible union which as yet we see not, we can well with patience wait for it. Considering the visible gain in spiritual motive that has come over us, we shall not be forward to pluck the ripening fruit of union before it matures. But, remembering the bitter controversies of the past, it is truly a marvelous thing that throughout these there has been preserved, in each one of the warring fragments of Christ's Body, the great essentials of the Faith; constituting an essential likeness, because preserving in each the reflection of Christ.²

The prophet who closes the canon of the Old Testament, speaking beforehand of Him and of His work, says, He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver.³ The refiner of that time knew his process completed when the molten metal reflected the clear unblemished likeness of the workman's face. Had no separations occurred, or in separation no bitterness, it might have seemed less wonderful that, when the great missionary bodies of Christendom came to look one another in the face as brethren, they found their essential likeness, in that they had the one message and the one foundation:⁴ The Person of Jesus Christ; His Eternal Power and Godhead; His Incarnation, Life, Teaching, Character; His Cross and His Resurrection; the Person and

¹ Ephesians, iv, 15. ² 2 Corinthians, iii, 18. ³ Malachi, iii, 1-3.

⁴ 1 Corinthians, iii, 10-15. Ephesians, ii, 20.

Mission of the Holy Ghost. Had not God been in the midst of His people ¹ throughout all the dissensions of Christendom, some of this surely must have been lost; with it saved, nothing is lost finally. Time indeed has been wasted, and opportunity; and both continue to be measurably lost while formal division remains; but there is such a thing as redeeming the time, and the more so while the evil days of outward division still mar that visible perfect unity, which shall be the token to the world that the Father has sent His Son to be its Saviour.²

Meanwhile, to those who can receive it, the unity that has been made visible in these latter days is the evidence of the working of that mighty Power which raised up Christ from the dead; and which through the ages has been the Life, alike of the Christian man and of the Christian Church.

¹ Psalm, xlv.

² St. John, iii, 17; xii, 47. 1 St. John, iv, 9-14.

CHAPTER III

INTERCOURSE

CONSIDERING the existing divisions of Christianity, and the unhappy human bitterness by which their relations have too often been marked, there is evident the great effect that must have been exerted upon the welfare of the Christian Body by the maintenance among its members of the personal Christian Life, patterned upon that of Jesus Christ. Through this faithfulness in the past, God has been enabled to sustain a spirit which not only has survived strife and bitterness, but has consecrated the successive periods of Christian history, and now finds prevalent so much accord of faith, of hope, and of love, as brightens to-day with promise for to-morrow. This happy issue intensifies the duty of each individual Christian to do all that in him lies to nourish in himself personally the life of Christ in full vigor.

In the fourth chapter of his Epistle to the Ephesians, the admonitions of St. Paul pass back and forth between the corporate and the individual life. Many of the precepts are applicable to both indifferently; and the consummation, that "we all attain unto a full grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ," while primarily applicable to the whole Body, in its organic unity,

is also clearly dependent in the Apostle's thought upon the steadfast fulfilment by each individual of his allotted part. "The working in due measure of each several part maketh the increase of the Body unto the building up of itself in love." Thus supported, the life of the Christian, in man and in Church, will be characterized by likeness to God and to Jesus Christ, the common source from which in each it derives. "To know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ Whom Thou hast sent, is Life Eternal" now, by Christ's own definition;¹ and only by growth in such knowledge shall be realized unto us the prayer of St. Paul for his Philipian converts, "that ye be like minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind,"² or purpose. Or, as he elsewhere says, "beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image from glory to glory."³

These two ideas of the Body and of the members,⁴ together with the basic truth — the operation of the Holy Spirit — upon which effectiveness depends, are voiced in one of the short prayers that have come down to us from ancient times, with the terseness and compactness which characterizes so much of those remarkable growths, the liturgies; indications, possibly, that only the fittest survived the test of usage. In the accepted English version it runs: By Thy Spirit the whole Body of the Church is governed and sanctified. Receive [therefore] our supplications and prayers, which we make before Thee, for all

¹ St. John, xvii, 3.

² Philippians, ii, 2.

³ 2 Corinthians, iii, 18.

⁴ 1 Corinthians, xii, 12, 13.

estates of men in Thy Holy Church; that every Member of the same in his vocation and ministry [calling and service] may truly and godly serve Thee. This Collect, the second for Good Friday, starts with the recognition of the Body, and of its dependence upon the Holy Ghost for guidance and development. Thence it descends to the collective orders — estates — of men within the Church; as, for instance, lay and clerical, or the several grades of the ministry. Then it recalls before God specifically each member of every order; for, if one member suffer, each suffers,¹ and the Body collectively. It is instructive to note too, as illustrative of the care used in wording the liturgies, that “governed” (guided) and “sanctified” correspond precisely, in meaning as in order, to vocation and ministry. A calling requires especially guidance; service, particularly consecration. So also calling must be “true” in direction; service “godly” in spirit.

Nothing tends to likeness more than does congenial association; and association implies intercourse, whence flows the close and comprehensive knowledge of which Jesus Christ speaks in the words above quoted. In no way can we so know a man as by intimate companionship with him; the cynical proverb that no man is a hero to his valet has its obverse side, when he who is known is also worthy. From such relations springs also influence. The effect of comrades — not to speak of parents — upon childhood and youth is notorious; and, in the sober self-appreciation of experience, we all must

¹ I Corinthians, xii, 26-30.

acknowledge ourselves to have been at each period of our lives, and still to be, the immature creatures which in God's eyes we are, ever learning, yet so slowly coming to the knowledge of the truth. It is startling in old age, when the promised light of evening tide ¹ begins to shine, to recognize how the tone, the accepted plausible maxims, of this world have blinded the eyes to the precepts — the express precepts, as well as the example — of Jesus Christ; how little we have been like Him, because we have not adequately known Him.

It is thus only, by constant association and intimate knowledge, as a man knows a friend, that we can grow like to God; ² and such association, in the case of One unseen, implies an effort, by which intercourse is maintained, as that with a distant friend is maintained by correspondence. The simile is as nearly exact, perhaps, as any comparison between the human and the Divine can be; but it fails in two particulars. God is not distant; and this intercourse is not between equals, but between the less and the Greater, the creature and the Creator, the finite and the Infinite; happily also between the child and the Father.

Intercourse implies mutual action, interaction; what in general we style communion, — something had or done in common. In the Christian scheme the primary provision for such intercourse is in the two Sacraments ordained by Christ Himself, — Baptism and the Holy Communion. Baptism, the

¹ Zechariah, xiv, 6, 7. Compare 2 Timothy, iv, 6-8. Revelation, xxii, 1-5.

² 2 Corinthians, iii, 18.

Sacrament of the new Birth, of Repentance accepted, though administered once for all, is valid and operative throughout life; conditioned always upon that earnest striving after better things which is repentance sustained in action. Without this the new birth ends in spiritual death; the man is cut off as a fruitless branch, and withers.¹ To Baptism man brings repentance, which rightly understood is the gift of himself, of his life and powers, to God; God in return gives the spiritual life, in Jesus Christ, — the Life of the Christian. This is Intercourse. The Holy Communion, prefaced always by renewed acts of repentance and Faith, is the perpetual transmission of the Life of Jesus Christ, imparted once for all in Baptism. It is the highest realization of Intercourse, of a reciprocal action essential to the Christian's Life; which apart from this cannot but languish and in the end cease.

To treat adequately these highest mysteries of the Christian Faith requires a breadth and depth of knowledge which I lack. In the simplicity of their definition they lie within the fruitful apprehension of the unlearned; but to comprehend them, to the full scope even of instructed human faculties, demands a profundity and extent of knowledge, and of reflection, with a power of balanced expression, to which few can pretend. I purpose therefore to limit my considerations to the simpler forms of Intercourse with God through Jesus Christ; to Prayer, Praise, Thanksgiving, and the reading of God's Word, commonly called the Bible. These

¹ St. John, xv, 2, 6.

four are essential parts of any complete system of Intercourse; as such they are found represented in all well-conceived formularies of public worship, as well as in the private devotions of a symmetrical Christian life, which itself is a perpetual worship.

Of these I take first Praise; partly because, rightly understood, it is the leading feature in Christian worship, being the recognition of the excellence — the worth-ship — of God, particularly as manifested to us in and by Jesus Christ. Logically, indeed, in order of time as of importance, Praise precedes Prayer and Thanksgiving; for Praise is but the outcome of the knowledge of God, and, without knowledge of Him, how shall we pray to Him, or give thanks? Praise is the act of devotion into which Self enters least, because it fastens upon the Person of God — which is His excellence — and disregards the person, the needs, and even the gratitude of the worshipper, who for the moment, and to his own consciousness, is engaged only in contemplating the beauty, power, and worthiness of the Character revealed to him. Yet, though unconsciously, Praise has its element of Prayer, as will be noted; as it also more obviously is akin to Thanksgiving.

A further reason for giving Praise a primacy of treatment is that it is more pervertedly an object of misconception than the other elements of worship; a misconception entirely superficial, quite unworthy of an intelligent creature, but still existent and general. I will illustrate by an incident in my experience. Over thirty years ago I was

sitting on the porch of a summer hotel in the company of an elderly man, much my senior. A lad of fifteen was talking to us, and in some connection, now forgotten by me, spoke of praising God. "Well, —," said my companion, "if the Lord is as good a fellow as I take Him to be, He will not care to be praised."

In this manifest confounding of praise with compliment, deference and unreadiness kept me from the reply, which is obvious. God does not care for our praises, in the sense of personal eulogy; as such merely, they add nothing to Him; but the sincere and loving contemplation of excellence, and recognition of it—which is the essence of Praise—react upon the character of him who praises, and tend strongly to induce in him that imitation and likeness—in this case to God—which is the great aim of God concerning us. In that way, not by the mere utterance of words, but by the accompanying transformation of ideals and character, our praises may well be pleasing to God; we may even reverently say He wants them, He needs them. Through them largely—in their essence through them only—is accomplished His Will, which is that we be perfect. In this way Praise involves inevitably aspiration; and aspiration is Prayer, uttered or unexpressed. True Praise therefore involves prayer, as a whole embraces its parts. Thus the two chief examples of Praise in the Prayer Book, outside the Psalter, the *Te Deum* and the *Gloria in Excelsis*, although beginning in pure praise, in their course turn with a certain inevitableness to prayer.

A proper illustration to the lad in the case might have been such as this. You have heard of George Washington? of his character, his disinterestedness, courage, patriotism; his endurance in the dark hours; the ultimate victory that his worthiness won over foe and over friend? for the closer friend knew him, the more he esteemed him. There is but one answer to these questions for an American boy. Well, you would like to be such a man as that, would you not? The more you think of him the stronger the wish? This perhaps would be getting beyond a boy's depth; but for a man who has put away childish things, this influence of great characters upon ideals, yielding in many cases a real uplifting of the life, should be a matter of experience, or at least of observation. Such regard for a person, and such result, are Praise in operation. The man who makes Washington his ideal praises him; and the more he meditates upon him, or carries thought into action, the truer the praise. It is so of Nelson, who like Washington, — both men with frailties, — is thus a living force in the lives of men to-day. Will it be less with the Creator than with His creatures?

But, more still, Praise is the natural expression of love, where the object is worthy. Even for those who have passed into the unseen, and are known to us only by their record, there may be aroused an enthusiasm little short of personal affection, well deserving the name of love. Though dead, they yet speak. Direct communion with them we have not, yet such as we have tells. But God lives, and Jesus Christ; not far off, but near; not resting from labors, as do

those, but working; above all, loving us and wanting our love. Can we love and be silent in our hearts? but if our hearts speak love He hears, though the lips move not; and the love is dear to Him. How should it not be, if we are created in His image? Have not we joy in being loved, valued by those we love? Loving is more and better than giving; being is better than doing. Praise is not flattery. God is not praised in order to induce Him to grant. To that end there is an appointed means; but it is Prayer, not Praise. God is praised for that which He is, and for that which He has done, irrespective of self.

If, then, Praise be of the heart, why formulate words of praise? Partly because the truth will out; the abundance of the heart will speak, and it speaks most effectively in words well weighed and measured. Besides, by a law of our nature, a habit of mind will issue in a habit of words, which are the expression of thought; and a habit of words is a form. Again, in this world, life for its preservation and action requires to be embodied in forms. Forms are essential to the preservation of spirit. Forms preserve obedience, reverence, duties, mutual respect and consideration. The virtue of institutions is in their spirit, but no institution can survive formal disuse. Most of all, God being unseen, and knowable only through His Word and Works, we must be at pains to analyze and formulate to ourselves, in somewhat definite expression, that knowledge of God which it is the office of biography to give us concerning men.

The presentation of personality, indeed, is the

great service of biography. The lives of men are of varied utility. Some serve for emulation, some for warning, all for instruction; but, that they may so serve, the teachings must be appropriated, made our own by familiarity with them, a process which involves effort, conscious or unconscious, sufficient to produce a definite and well proportioned image. This is the task of the biographer, which the reader must supplement by attention. Character is not appreciated fully, except as the features are clearly drawn out and the several traits named and illustrated by the revelations of the life. The like must be done if we would truly know God, and He being all excellence the result is Praise; which, however real and from the heart, will tend to the habit which we call formal.

Thus, the foundation of Praise is the knowledge of God. This is the root whence the flower springs. How then shall we know God with that intimacy of knowledge which alone deserves the name? To give direction to the efforts which are necessary to this end, let us realize that we can know Him only if we will use His biography; His own revelation of His Person and His Character, in His Acts and in His Words. He will doubtless deal directly with every man according to His purposes, unfolding Himself within;¹ but upon the condition common to all advance, natural or spiritual, that the man in turn will use appointed means.² His revelation is given

¹ St. John, xiv, 21-23. Revelation, iii, 20. Ephesians, iii, 17. Philippians, ii, 13.

² St. John, vi, 53, 54. Philippians, ii, 12. Galatians, vi, 7-9.

through two media: the written Word which we call the Bible, and the living Word,¹ Jesus Christ, of Whom the written word is the testimony,² the pale reflection of His Eternal glory.³ In a treatment of Worship, therefore, the natural transition is from Praise to the means through which we learn the motive and the matter of Praise: to the reading and hearing of God's Word, in the varied expansion of these processes, which involve all that God can minister to us through other men, as well as directly to ourselves. Preaching and devotional literature are fitting and logical extensions of the Word of God.

We can use means. We could not have originated communion with God, but we can comply with the conditions of further and perpetual communion. The necessary beginning of Intercourse, its primary stage, is for God to communicate to us. He did so in the beginning, by constituting our nature such that we could receive knowledge of Him. He continued to impart knowledge, as the race was able to receive it;⁴ by direct revelation, — immediately, — as to Abraham, or mediately by His messengers, Moses and the Prophets. He fulfilled all by the revelation of Himself in a human Life — the Life of

¹ St. John, i, 1-14. 1 St. John, i, 1-4.

² Revelation, xix, 10. St. Matthew, xiii, 16, 17. St. Luke, x, 23, 24; xxiv, 25-27. St. John, v, 39, 45-47. Acts, iii, 22-25; xiii, 27-29, 32-41. Hebrews, i, 5-13; v, 5, 6; ix, 1-15. 1 St. Peter, i, 10-12.

³ St. John, viii, 58; xvii, 5, 24. Philippians, ii, 5-8.

⁴ Collate Exodus, vi, 3, with St. Matthew, xxviii, 19. St. Matthew, xix, 7, 8. St. John, xvi, 12-15. 1 Corinthians, ii, 13, 14; iii, 2. Hebrews, v, 11-14.

Christ;¹ and by Him He promised further guidance, "into all truth," by the Holy Ghost, Whose coming should follow Christ's departure and Who should abide with us forever.² It may reasonably be believed that He continues still to reveal to the individual, and to the body we call the Church, as each may need; but it is unreasonable, even irrational, to expect that He will do so where there is neglect of the medium through which He has chosen to make Himself known to us. In the revealed Word He supplies, as it were, the raw material, which under the joint operation of man's effort and of the Holy Spirit is wrought into the particular guidance, which constitute the daily revelation and providence that each man and each Church needs.

Dr. Johnson observed truly that the first condition of successful biography is close personal intercourse; and the remark received striking illustration, by the hearer of it producing the most vivid presentation of a human personality that the English language has achieved. We know Johnson as we know no other man of his time, because we have been brought thus into a contact with him which is the nearest possible short of immediate acquaintance. Only autobiography, if absolutely sincere, as may be the case where copious correspondence remains, can be more satisfying to the desire to know a man. If a man has written much and frankly to many people, there will almost certainly transpire an abundance of

¹ St. John, xiv, 7-11; xii, 45. Colossians, i, 15. Hebrews, i, 3.

² St. John, xiv, 16, 17, 25, 26; xv, 26; xvi, 7-15. See Romans, viii. 1 Corinthians, ii, 9-13. 1 St. John, iii, 24; iv, 13.

evidence as to his real self. Interested readers will receive an impression which will correspond to the truth, be true in part; but in part only, because such impression is inevitably modified by the characteristics of the reader, just as a painter reads himself into a portrait. Autobiography thus imparted is better than the best biography; because the impression so derived, the portrait thus drawn, is the reader's own achievement, bone of his bone, flesh of his flesh, and therefore more real to him than any secondary acquisition made through another man's portrayal.

Autobiography is that which God has given us in the Bible. In old time He spoke by divers portions and in divers manners,¹ in the Prophets, and in the Law, which together sum up substantially the Old Testament; and in the end of those days He spoke again *in* — not merely *by* — a Son.² That is, God has given us an abundant correspondence, of which He is the Author, addressed to many persons under many conditions; and in addition He has spoken *in* a Son, in the Son's Life,³ not by His Words only. The character of Jesus Christ is the replica of the character of God revealed in the Old Testament. The two are drawn by the same hand; a consideration which gives double force to Christ's statement that He came to fulfil — not to destroy — the Law and the Prophets.⁴ The picture of God drawn in the Law and the Prophets is accurate as far as it goes; that is, it is truth, but not yet the full truth. This

¹ Hebrews, i, 1.

³ St. John, i, 4, 14, 18.

² *Ibid.*, i, 2-4.

⁴ St. Matthew, v, 17.

it could not be, because the various writers, severally or collectively, were not able fully to receive or fully to convey the communications addressed to them by God.¹ They could not receive, because they were of their time, though head and shoulders above it; they could not convey, because their hearers, to whom, through them, the correspondence was ultimately addressed, were even less capable of comprehension than themselves. The old writers labored under the disabilities of painters in the early history of art.

In His self-revelation God could not rise above such conditions; because He could not violate the nature of man, as constituted by Himself in His purpose to bring many sons to glory — or to perfection.² The process of education, the bringing natural capacities, possibilities, to fulfilment, for a race as for an individual, must proceed through the will of man, to which God has given independence of Himself. Apart from this there cannot be wrought glory, or merit of any character, or any perfection worthy of the name. The will of man, by affecting coöperation, conditions each man's progress; the collective wills of men the progress of any race; and the point to which a man or a race has advanced conditions the knowledge which can be imparted, the knowledge even of God, which is revelation.³ A child must think as a child; to press upon him the ideas of a man would be to crush rather than to expand.

¹ 1 St. Peter, i, 10-12.

² Hebrews, ii, 9, 10.

³ Collate with this the words of Christ: "Moses for the hardness of your heart suffered you to put away your wives." St. Matthew, xix, 8.

St. Paul attests forcibly this point of view. In his exposition of the insufficiency of the Law to the needs of his day, he fully recognizes its adequacy and purpose in the past. It filled the position of a tutor over men still in the childhood of progress,¹ requiring obedience literal and unquestioning, such as befits childhood, and to such promising reward. But, as development progressed, the method was increasingly outgrown. Observance of the letter became an unbearable yoke,² as the discipline of childhood is to manhood; and, yet more important, as its spiritual demands became clearer to advancing reason, the impossibility of fulfilling them was demonstrated by experience.³ This experience, showing the need of a deliverer, prepared men to accept and follow Christ, Who fulfilled all the requirements of the Law upon universal mankind. Having so fulfilled, He superseded it by His own teaching; itself not a destruction but a fulfilment, to which is added a promise of future continued guidance into all truth.⁴

These limitations to God's action seem to follow irresistibly from His purpose to bring many sons to a glory⁵ asserted in the New Testament, and implied in the Old. Man is to be made higher than the angels,⁶ brought to a greater glory. Wherein? The angels too have wills, for through self-will some fell. They are liable to temptation, for they fell.

¹ Galatians, iii, 19, to iv, 7.

² Acts, xv, 10. Galatians, v, 1.

³ Romans, vii, 7-24; viii, 2-4.

⁴ St. John, xiv, 26; xvi, 12-15.

⁵ Hebrews, ii, 10.

⁶ *Ibid.*, ii, 5-16; Psalm, viii.

But man is made lower than they, in whatsoever that inferiority consists, in order that through — not by — the operation of his will God might exalt him in the overcoming of difficulties and of suffering, the effect of which in developing character is testified by experience as well as by the Bible. “To him that overcometh I will give to sit down with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and sat down with My Father in His throne.”¹ This is the triumph of humanity; its perfection in the Christ Who overcame, and in His followers. All do not overcome; but those who do rise to a nature higher than they otherwise could. To the race, and to God, the loss in the one is more than compensated by the gain in the other. The work is God’s; the result is not accomplished by man’s will, but by God through man’s will, which is an essential condition, not the vital factor. The one is the soil, the other the seed.

By bearing in mind the varied conditions of the successive stages in the race’s progress, and the diverse characters of the writers who received the Divine messages, — the correspondents of God, — the unity of the picture they give gains in impressiveness. The drawings, we may say, are many, in that many hands have been engaged upon them; but the consistency of the Being portrayed continues throughout, evidencing that the Original who manifested Himself to their consciousness is one and the same.

Were the Bible the work of one imaginative man

¹ Revelation, iii, 21. Also, ii, 7, 11, 17, 26; iii, 5, 12; xii, 11; xv, 2; xxi, 7. St. John, xvi, 33.

of genius, consistency of portrayal would not be exceptional, or surprising; that it is found as the work of many hands, through several centuries, is a fair indication that they are presenting the same Person, even the one God, for in this they agree as their avowed purpose. As there is no difference between Jew and Gentile, but the same God over all is rich unto all that call upon Him;¹ as He is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth Him and doeth righteousness is accepted with Him;² so there is no distinction of period, no differentiation on the score of natural gifts, or of position, in the prevailing features of the revelation to each. It is one throughout: the oneness of God; His continuous overruling and providence, from creation onward; the duty of obedience to Him, and of righteous dealing with the neighbor; the assurance of judgment, the assurance of forgiveness, all receiving precise and successive development, broadening their scope and spiritualizing observance. There is consideration of circumstances, what is styled "talking down" towards the level of the hearer, a process in continual practice to-day when a speaker, to put his subject in clearer light, uses what we call illustration; but there is this constant characteristic: that the talk is always above the level of the contemporary hearer; not out of his reach, but elevated and elevating.

This is a phase of that which Christ described as His mission: fulfilling the Law and the Prophets; accepting the past and present, as so much gain, but

¹ Romans, x, 12.

² Acts, x, 34, 35.

leading up and on from it. In several instances in the Sermon on the Mount this is obvious, on the surface; but it is not easy instantly to recognize the same in such comment as that on "Thou shalt not forswear thyself." Here Christ apparently annuls; but when it is considered that "Thou shalt not forswear thyself" forbids solemn asseverations lightly¹ uttered and lightly disregarded, it is seen that to "swear not at all" is advance on the same line; fulfilment, not destruction. It is the developing spirit of the third commandment of the Decalogue. So with the treatment of the Sabbath. The command "to rest" receives some explanatory comment in the second giving of the law: "that thy man servant and maid servant may rest as well as thou." Christ's "It is lawful to do good on the Sabbath" is a further fulfilment of the purposes of physical mercy which underlie the fourth commandment. Suffering relieved is rest given; fulfilment, not destruction. Under the Christian dispensation, St. Paul anticipates advance in knowledge, as did Christ. Let us, as many as are full grown, be thus minded; and if in anything ye (any of you) be otherwise minded, this also shall God reveal unto you: *only*, whereunto we *have* attained, by that same rule let us walk.² These things manifest the continuity of the advance, and from it is indicated the oneness of Him Who speaks throughout.

It will be said, however, that this graduated advance is but an instance of the general history of

¹ Exodus, xx, 7. Leviticus, xix, 12. Deuteronomy, xxiii, 21.

² Philippians, iii, 15, 16.

civilization; a slow emergence of higher ideals, winning their way, stage by stage, to general acceptance, and thence to incorporation in established law and custom. The Christian reply would be that evolution under the Jewish economy, the Law and the Prophets, was indeed gradual, in that respect sharing the characteristics of all progress; but that it was throughout on a higher plane, entertained higher aims, and reached a higher result. For, not only are Jewish thoughts of God purer and more elevated, not only the spiritual and moral ideals more excellent, but Jesus Christ Himself, in the singular beauty of His character, drew His human nature from Judaism. The Law and the Prophets are fulfilled not only by Him, but in Him; they are the root of which He is the flower. To use His own words, Wisdom is justified of her children.¹ He is the child, He the result, which justifies the antecedent history.

Since the coming of Christ, advance, when durable, has been confined as a fact almost wholly to Christian civilization, and has been due ultimately to the presence and influence of the Christian Church; therein fulfilling the prophetic word of its Founder, that it should be the salt, preserving that which has already been attained, and the leaven working continuously to further results.² The Saracens developed an order of civilization which ceased to progress, and has not endured. The stationariness of the East has become proverbial; China and Japan gloried in conservatism until touched by Christianity.

¹ St. Matthew, xi, 19.

² St. Matthew, v, 13; xiii, 33.

The Church has been the instrument for preserving the knowledge of the only true God and of Jesus Christ, which is the life of the Christian man and the Christian community. Thus inspired, she has upon the whole, with many sins and shortcomings, sought above all the Kingdom of God and His Righteousness; and to the civilization thus consecrated has been realized the promise to such a course, that all other things — the material fruits of our civilization — would be added.¹ This providential ordering is in itself as clear as the revealed providential guidance and development told in the Jewish Scriptures. Reliance upon it is an appeal to history; and to this the Church adds the testimony of the individual experience, reproducing in miniature the advance of Christendom at large in the knowledge of God, in the observance of His ways, and in consequent benefit. The witness of two is true.

The appeal to history involves a laborious analysis, to which very few can be competent, to detect and indicate the indispensable influence of the Church, and of its life, upon the general progress. Many can read; but not all can separate the elements in the composite result. The difficulty rests not merely in the variety of motives and characters recognizable in Christian history in general, but in the mixture of good and bad in the Church itself, and in the commanding individual characters of Church history. The mingling of self-sacrifice and self-seeking, often disguised to the man himself as the interest of the Church, and therefore of God; weakness and

¹ St. Matthew, vi, 33.

strength, wisdom and folly, purity of purpose and blindness of moral perception, meeting not only in a period, but in the same man. From these causes history is seen in a blur; conclusions will vary and can only be general. The question in fact becomes one of testimony to character, the credit due on the whole to the Christian Church, whether it has fulfilled the prediction of its Founder, been as salt and as leaven.

The verdict of personal experience is simpler and surer; but it must be remembered that experience implies expertness, — an expert. That is, the result can be reached only after patient continued testing, analogous to the experiments of Science in method, but not in fundamental spirit. For Science demands Sight, whereas Christian conviction interprets experiences by Faith. On the ground of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, the conditions imposed by Him are accepted, as being not arbitrary, but truths asserted to us as of His knowledge; with them, and in His spirit, the course of man must be ordered, walking by faith, not by sight. Thus doing, the witness of the Resurrection, with which man begins, becomes in time the witness of personal certainty — the witness in himself.¹ Such result cannot be transferred as experience, but it can be certified to another; and when this has been done by many the cumulative force is very great, reinforcing independently and powerfully the testimony from history.

Perpetual uplifting is one characteristic of the portrait. The God of to-day is always the God of

¹ Romans, viii, 16. Galatians, iv, 6. 1 St. John, v, 10.

yesterday; and in nothing more than that, as the understanding of the follower increases, he finds Him ever rising above him, drawing him upwards. Always, as Moses said, and St. Paul quoted, "The commandment is not far off. It is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say who shall go up for us into heaven and bring it to us. Neither is it beyond the sea; . . . but the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it."¹ Walk by the rule thou hast and thou shalt ascend continuously, — shalt attain; for there is in Moses the promise also of the future, the upward movement, to be fulfilled in the Prophet who should be raised up like unto him,² — fulfilled in Christ, but partly and continuously realized in His predecessors.³

There is, of course, the current objection that the God revealed to Israel differs not in degree but in kind from the God revealed by and in Jesus Christ. The One, it is said, is a tribal God, the God of a single small people; a God of vengeance, a jealous God; a God who is described as angry, as avenging Himself, as repenting of His purposes, as administering rude justice, or worse injustice, in primitive fashion. This is not the view of Christ Himself, or of Christianity. To Christ, the Revealer, the Law and the Prophets are a series consecutive with Himself and issuing in Him.⁴

¹ Deuteronomy, xxx, 11-14. Romans, x, 6-8.

² Deuteronomy, xviii, 15. St. Matthew, xi, 3. St. John, i, 21. Acts, iii, 19-23; vii, 37.

³ St. Matthew, xi, 12-14; vii, 12. St. Luke, xvi, 16. 1 St. Peter, i, 10-12.

⁴ St. Matthew, v, 17-20; xiii, 16, 17; xxii, 35-40. St. Mark,

On this point the New Testament itself has no doubts; but as a proposition to be weighed to-day rationally, — by the human mind, — there are two leading considerations. The portrait of God depicted for us in the Old Testament must be looked upon as a whole, — the *ensemble*, to use a French idiom, — not merely one feature at a time; perhaps it should rather be said, the effect of all the portraits by the several portrayers must be allowed to present their ultimate joint result. It will be found, I think, that no serious discordance in any part will be felt by one familiar with the whole; and, secondly, it will be admitted that certain conspicuous traits appear through all, while contradictions are only apparent. The tribal God is tribal merely in the sense that He has chosen Israel for His own possession, for especial purposes; as each individual man is fore-ordained for a specific work. He is throughout the supreme “One” over all other gods; and His choice of Israel is from the first ¹ as a means, by which, and in which, all nations ultimately shall be blessed, — shall be made His. I speak, of course, of the words of the Bible itself; not of the meaning attributed to them by the Israelites of the day of their utterance.

The anger and the vengeance of God, too, are not rejected in the words of the revelation of the New Testament. That Jesus Christ as Man, and as the

xii, 28–34. St. Luke, x, 25–28; xxiv, 27, 32, 44–47. St. John, v, 39, 46, 47. Acts, xiii, 27–29. Galatians, iii, 23–25.

¹ Genesis, xii, 3. So Moses at a later but still very primitive day addresses Jehovah as the God of the spirits of all flesh. Numbers, xvi, 22; xxvii, 16.

Son of Man, refused to call down fire from heaven upon those who repelled Him¹ does not prevent His placing in His own mouth the words, "Depart from Me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire."² The words are words of wrath, — not of hatred, — the act an act of vengeance, as wrath and vengeance are commonly understood; and if we have learned to believe that as done by God they can be called wrath and vengeance only relatively to man, that they are not exact expressions of God's Being and conduct, but illustrations, convenient to man's understanding and speech, why deny to the Old Testament that which we have to concede to the New?

The *ensemble* of Christ's character, in word and in act, triumphantly vindicates from inconsistency these words and this deed. The perfectness of His self-sacrifice, from birth to death, justify from all taint of self His words of wrath, His act of judgment. Incidentally, indeed, He places before us the explanation,³ that failure in love towards men is the failure of life, is spiritual death; but the perfectness of His teaching and life carry their own assurance here, and even in instances where we may be perplexed, as in the imprecation on the fig-tree.⁴ It has been reasonably said, "When a man speaks truth as far as I can test him, I believe his words when they pass beyond my understanding." So the *ensemble* of the Character revealed in the Old Testament justifies to reason commands and acts, which to us may be hard to understand just

¹ St. Luke, ix, 54, 55.

³ *Ibid.*, 44, 45.

² St. Matthew, xxv, 41.

⁴ *Ibid.*, xxi, 18-22.

because of our difference of environment, and of thought, acquired in the progress of revelation.

Again, the jealousy attributed to God in the Decalogue does not differ from the words of Christ: He that loveth father or mother, son or daughter, more than Me is not worthy of Me.¹ Whoso forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be My disciple.² This is not a captious demand for personal consideration. It is the statement of a condition, of a principle, universally recognized but here of most vital application,—the necessity of concentration of effort to success, of what Christ elsewhere calls “the single eye,” and Napoleon, “exclusiveness of purpose.” Purpose is the exact word needed for this definition. As life often shows, there may be many necessary activities, jostling and even impeding one another; but amid and above all can be the one dominating will to make each an item of service to God, excluding all other motives from rivalry with this. Thus St. Paul writes: Whatsoever ye do, in word or deed,—or thought,—do all in the Name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks.³ The commonest necessities may contribute to build up this controlling singleness of mind. “Whether ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.”⁴ Diversities of ministrations, but one Master.⁵

Nowhere can this exclusiveness be more necessary than in the chiefest of concerns, religion; and at no time more essential than at the issuance of the

¹ St. Matthew, x, 37, 38.

² St. Luke, xiv, 26–33.

³ Colossians, iii, 17. ⁴ 1 Corinthians, x, 31. ⁵ *Ibid.*, xii, 5.

Decalogue, when the worship of Jehovah only, in face of general polytheism, was a necessary first step to the recognition by Israel that there was no other than He, and thence to the admission of that truth by others than Israel. These are but other forms of the pronouncement which beyond all other binds together the Old and the New, the word alike of Moses and of Christ: The Lord our God is One, and thou shalt love Him with all thy powers. There is to Him no rival; for the commandment, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, is second only. There is no commandment greater than these.¹ They summarize the revealed character of God, and taken together constitute the unity of the Revelation in the two Testaments.

The severity and the jealousy of the God of the Exodus is thus manifested also in Jesus Christ, and repeatedly affirmed by His immediate followers, the Twelve and St. Paul. Equally the tenderness of Christ is taught of Jehovah in many passages of the Old Testament, specifically and notably in the Exodus, in immediate connection with the giving of the Law, the stern school-master, at Sinai. This is the moment chosen for the gracious announcement of the character of the God of Israel: Jehovah, Jehovah, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abundant in lovingkindness and truth; keeping lovingkindness for thousands, forgiving iniquity and sin, *and* that will by no means clear the guilty.² Note the conjunction — *and*, not but. There is in

¹ St. Matthew, xxii, 34-40. St. Mark, xii, 28-31. St. Luke, x, 25-28. Deuteronomy, vi, 4.

² Exodus, xxxiv, 5-7.

these opposed declarations no opposition of qualities, no dissonance. The Being of God, which is His character, is a perfect harmony. It is the discord of man that induces the appearance of an opposition which is not internal to the Godhead, but external to it, and in effect. It is the same God throughout, alike in Sinai and in the Crucifixion. It is also the same Man, in different stages of development; and to him God speaks in like tones, but with application wider and deeper as generations pass. Only so can Man have intercourse with God; so only can any creature know the Creator, — in terms of its own limited being. There may be endless increase; we have eternity before us; the knowledge then compared to the knowledge now¹ will be immeasurable; but then as now, and as in Abraham's day, it will be knowledge only of the time reached and of the progress made.

As regards the methods prescribed for early Jewish justice, and in the commands such as that to extirpate the nations of Canaan, it may be admitted that these are not consonant to the methods of Christianity; it does not follow that they are inconsistent with the underlying Spirit which constitutes the unity of the two Testaments. To illustrate, they are to be regarded exactly as the amputation of a limb to save a life, or the sacrificing the child to save the mother from whom it is being born, as necessary means to an end. In the created universe human life is the greatest thing known to us, and of the most price. Nevertheless, human life

¹ 1 Corinthians, xiii, 12.

is not the most valuable thing in the world. We must accept the paradox; that we do, is formulated in the proverb, Death rather than dishonor. The frequent abuse of the expression does not invalidate its truth. The right to live is not absolute, but conditional. Where a life contravenes the ends at stake, the life must be taken away. Life does not begin and end in itself, or for itself. It is itself a means, not an end. When it ceases to forward the end for which it exists, it forfeits its right to continue; when it contravenes that end its destruction is permissible, and may be imperative.

Here it is not a good end that justifies an evil means. The means are right; because life is not so sacrosanct that it should not be forfeited for cause, as must be every means which does not fulfil its end. "Cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground?"¹ The fig-tree of this parable had life, the end of which was the bearing of figs; it bore no figs; the end not being accomplished, the means, the tree's life, was worthless. Man's judgment of such a condition in human life is liable to error; yet most admit that in certain cases it is right to take away life, or all that makes life desirable; that these are proper means to protect society from a life which contradicts its purpose. We reasonably limit such forfeiture to distinct acts, clearly proved; so admitting that only in marked and clear instances is man's judgment adequate to decide this issue. This inadequacy is the basis of refusal to take away life, where it seemingly merely protracts hopeless suffer-

¹ St. Luke, xiii, 6-9.

ing. Man cannot know the hopelessness, either physical or spiritual; nor estimate the value of the life to the spiritual welfare of the sufferer or to others. But on any supposition of a God, He does know and rightly may act. He may take away the righteous from evil to come;¹ man may not. He is acting continually. Every death is His summons, His verdict, that the life has failed definitively; or has fulfilled its end here, and is ready for transplanting there.

These conclusions are humanly commonplaces, and in nothing contrary to Christianity. Having in mind the presuppositions of the existence of God, and of His purposes, with the other circumstances of the Old Testament, the current attitude towards its severities reflects a present conventional softness of outlook, extended impartially towards our own faults and towards the punishment of the worst of offences, — if we ourselves have not suffered by them. This is not only different from the spirit of Christ, but opposed to it. “The Son of Man shall put away out of His Kingdom all things that offend, or do iniquity”;² a fate worse than death, as indicated by the words immediately following, however symbolical: “and shall cast them into the furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.”

Apply these considerations to the nations of Canaan. The repeated Old Testament command concerning them, now assumed to be contrary to the spirit of a merciful God, is summed up in the words: “Thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them; thou

¹ Isaiah, lvii, 1.

² St. Matthew, xiii, 41, 42.

shalt make no covenant with them, nor show mercy unto them;" "thine eye shall have no pity on them."¹ This is the sentence, the mandate of the Judge to the executioner; and it is accompanied by the justification, the finding, let us say, of the jury. "Not for the righteousness of Israel, but for the wickedness of these nations, in various specified charges,² doth Jehovah thy God drive them out from before thee."³ Coupled with the command is its purpose, equally repeated: to preserve the separateness of Israel by isolation, that the worship of the true God may not perish from the race. "Neither shalt thou serve their gods, nor make marriages with them; for they will turn away thy children from following Me. Thou shalt utterly destroy them, that they teach you not to do after all their abominations, which they have done unto their gods; for so would ye sin against Jehovah, your God."⁴

In short, the Old Testament presents to us a community, not yet a nation, and in childhood; surrounded by moral dangers, and still in an immaturity like that of opening manhood, with its familiar perils. It has behind it scarcely a tradition, beyond that of its origin, save the superimposed weakness of centuries of bondage. It is brought into contact with peoples more numerous, more highly organized, and possessing a more developed civilization; corrupt, but extremely attractive to a nomad pastoral race such as the Israelites were. The essence of

¹ Deuteronomy, vii, 2-4, 16.

² Leviticus, xviii, 24-30. Deuteronomy, xii, 31; xviii, 9-14.

³ Deuteronomy, ix, 4, 5. ⁴ *Ibid.*, vii, 3, 16; xx, 17, 18.

the corruption is in the religious system and its practices; to which stand opposed the revelation but recently committed to Israel of the Oneness of God, and a moral code distinctly in advance — though not beyond reach — of that which the Jews had hitherto accepted. The purpose — by the Record — is to establish them in this land, central to the civilizations then existent, the highway between Babylonia, Syria, and Egypt, on the borders of the sea frequented by the most adventurous seamen and hardiest commercial pioneers known to antiquity, between the capitals to be founded in a still distant future by Alexander and Constantine; to establish them, and to preserve their racial faith and character from submersion by the conditions they found there prevailing. The enemy is more numerous, mightier, as well as more highly civilized. Granting a conquest, will not the vanquished absorb their conquerors, intruding upon them their polity, their religion, their civilization in all its aspects? We know how the Roman Empire affected the Teutonic invaders; how, on the other hand, the English, having driven out the Britons, established their own system, which in turn swallowed up the Norman invader. To this day Great Britain remains English, as the Jew remained the Jew, and brought forth the Christ. Could it have been so had they become Canaanite in essentials, in foundation?

Conditions like those of Canaan are not confined to the ancient world. Will any one seriously contend that the North American continent should have been left forever in the hands of tribes whose sole use

of their territory was to contravene the purposes of human life? The question addresses itself only to the general proposition. It does not suggest the propriety of particular acts of the whites, even judged by the standard of their day; though it must be recalled that John Fiske, a competent authority, says that Penn's justly lauded method of purchase was the rule, not the exception.¹ Again, will any one maintain that, as a matter of human justice, it was wrong for the English colonists to dispossess the French government of territory which kept their borders in perpetual horror and bloodshed? Does it strike any believer in a Providence as iniquitous that God should remove by violence an absolutism which paralyzed human development at its sources, and should replace it with a government that freed human energies to their lawful ends? Is not light shed upon that past, as Christ's coming sheds light upon Judaism, as we note in the present that the territory redeemed from the Red Indian and from Bourbon despotism is being made a haven for the needy and oppressed of all races, and that the traditions of liberty, law, free institutions, have thus become the possession of many kindreds to whom they were unknown in their former homes?

The parallelism, in order of consequences, between the occupation of Canaan by the Israelites and the occupation of America by the English race, is so close, that an American of to-day, guarding himself from ignoring his country's shortcomings, may rever-

¹ Dutch and Quaker Colonies, ii, 160-162.

ently trace the comparison, and see in both the finger of God; revelation shedding light on history called secular. Canaan was occupied by the Jews, who brought thereto, besides their national character, a religious creed of the highest order for that day: a tradition of the unity of God, and a code of morals, formulated into observances, built up on that foundation of allegiance to one God; further, a hope for the future, to be realized in a Messiah. When established in the land they possessed a political organization, extremely simple, theocratic in form, the cohesive features of which were the national faith, pregnant of the future of Judaism and of Christianity, and the policy of isolation necessary to its preservation and purity. This exclusion of foreign admixture during the youth and immaturity of the people, though not fully enforced by themselves, intensified the traditions of which they were the sole possessors; breeding, it is true, a spirit of caste, which with all its exaggerations has the tough merit of endurance, and is not without its analogue in every virile nation. Then, when the fullness of time was come, the promise made unto the fathers, never wholly forgotten, cherished always as a living hope, God fulfilled unto the children when He raised up the Messiah.¹ With this fulfilment of its object isolation ceased. Judaism had accomplished its mission of safeguarding truth until it was strong enough to bear the inrush of the peoples, without weakening by the dilution. The salt had kept its saltness.² The tree was justified by

¹ Acts, ii, 22-32; iii, 22-26; xiii, 32-39; xxvi, 6-8.

² St. Matthew, v, 13; St. Mark, ix, 50; St. Luke, xiv, 34.

its fruit,¹ and was ready to spread beyond the narrow bounds of Palestine and to cover the earth.

Turn to America. By successive events in history, — which to the Christian is the overruling of human action by Divine Providence, — the territory known as the thirteen colonies, and subsequently that of Canada, became committed to English hands. These brought the strong traditions of liberty and law, set over against each other, in counterpoise, energizing through representative government, already mature, though not yet fully developed. In due transition this political heritage, endowed now with the power of an accepted creed, passed to the United States; and coincident therewith arose in Europe conditions which not only diverted further European strife but imposed upon America a formal policy of political isolation. To this influence distance contributed, as did a need of men in Europe; first to fulfil the demands of protracted war, and subsequently to repair its ravages. In a population so engrossed, emigration on a large scale lacked motive. The American people grew up separate, like the Jews, a people that dwelt alone, not reckoned among the nations; buffeted recklessly on the one cheek and on the other by the European belligerents; a factor in their game, but without their respect. “Who reads an American book?” Immigration in quantity had not begun. The tradition received from the fathers was intensified by in-breeding. Still a third of a century passed, in which the presence of an

¹ St. Matthew, vii, 16–20; xii, 33. St. John, x, 25, 37, 38; xv, 24.

ominous internal question fixed upon itself national attention, in an effort to retain the territory it had received, and to preserve unimpaired the tradition of a national unity. That accomplished, there swelled mightily the influx of alien elements, like the Gentile into the Jewish Christian Church. Reverence dare not parallel any merely human incident to the coming of Him in Whom all true Jewish tradition was fulfilled; but in the one sequence as in the other we may trace development, and note a "fullness of time."¹

The lesson gains in impressiveness if we work back to its antecedents, to English history. The summary may be brief, for the continuous analogy is obvious. From an early continental home, among many kindred peoples, came the tribes of the Angles and the Saxons, bearing with them the seeds of English political faith, formulated in rude custom. They thrust out the Britons from Britain, and called the land by their own name. Canaan became Judæa. Insular position and the preoccupations of the continent favored separateness. The Norman conquest, for the same reasons, was but an incident; influential extremely, but appropriated, assimilated, and absorbed. Shakespeare's "silver sea" maintained isolation, and with it insularity and narrowness; but insularity and narrowness intensified race character, preserved race institutions, and deepened political conviction. To such matured conditions of faith and polity came the fullness of time, in the days of Elizabeth and the early Stuarts; colonization began. As later to the Americans, there supervened

¹ Galatians, iv, 4. St. John, vii, 6, 8.

a period of constitutional struggle, concentrating national energies upon national ideals. Invigorated by the strife, (which again was but an incident, of progress, not of arrest), the people arose, like a giant refreshed with wine, and poured forth into all the world. America, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, with the mother country, are not only the consecutive but the consistent development of a small people, called out of their country, possessing a new land, driving out the inhabitants, maintained there in separateness, intensified in political faith, and then launched upon the world; not, let us hope, to conquer, but to convert. First in the isolation of England by insularity, and then in the isolation of her offspring by remoteness, God nurtured a peculiar tradition of liberty and law, differing in forms but identical in spirit, to become in the end a common heritage of mankind.

The conquest of Canaan was humanly probable. A corrupt civilization becomes effeminate, and is apt to go down before a simpler foe. But how should the conquest be regulated, to serve the purposes of a foreseeing God? a God in whose hands were the issues of life, as they are now; Who can determine justly. The command given is expulsion, by death if necessary. A line is drawn between the treatment of nations who surround the Israelite territory and those who dwell in it.¹ An external danger, though near, bears no such peril as does one which permeates the structure of social and political life. If a physical constitution be sound, it may move unimpaired amid

¹ Deuteronomy, xx, 10-18.

influences threatening health. The soundness of Israel's political condition depended upon maintaining the exclusive worship of the one God, which could not be accomplished if the native inhabitants remained, in the intimacy of social relations that would ensue, with their demoralizing worships appealing to the fervid passions of a vigorous primitive people.¹ Clear command was given to eradicate, not only men, but women, whose profound influence upon men, in social and religious life, is here recognized; as to us ourselves it is clearly phrased in cynical proverb.

The object is the preservation of a nation for a great specific purpose, the maintenance and ultimate diffusion of the knowledge of the one God, concerning which Jesus Christ says, "To know the only true God is life eternal."² The means is separateness, in order to assure internal purity of race, custom, and worship, for the time essential to the object. The method is extirpation of internal evil influences. In no one of these ideas is there aught alien to the spirit of Christ;³ but the particular conjuncture demanded a particular treatment which is opposite to His own action and words in the conjuncture which He faced; and from His course we have deduced a softness of view which has little in common with Him, and which loses sight of principle as qualifying conduct. To a common type of intellect the

¹ Exodus, xxiii, 31-33; xxxiv, 12-17.

² St. John, xvii, 3.

³ St. Matthew, xiii, 37-42, 49, 50; vii, 23; xxv, 41. 2 Corinthians, vi, 14-18; vii, 1.

pardon of a particular sinner means that the sin is in essence venial. The justification of the methods prescribed is, precisely, that it is the command of God, in Whose hands are the issues of life, and Who is continually issuing His sentences of death, to-day as then. We are often now perplexed by the removal of particular persons, and we need not pretend fully to comprehend in the case of the Canaanites; but it can be seen that, if the charges of the Bible against them be accepted, their lives were justly forfeit, for they had become irredeemably means to evil and not to good.

There is in this nothing contrary to the spirit of Christ; no divergence between the temper of the Old and the New Testament. As Man, Christ absolutely refrains from retaliation, and even from resentment, for personal injury or insult, and lays upon His followers unqualified command to the same effect.¹ "Father, forgive,"² sums up His life, as it does His mission of redemption; but He neither condones obstinate evil, nor forbids official punishment. This, indeed, He tells us, He as Man,—acting officially, as we say,—will inflict upon incurable impenitents,³ which the Canaanites were. The command to destroy is, on God's part, the sentence of a judge, not an expression of hatred; the Israelites in complying are not the ministers of vengeance but of justice, as strictly as an executioner of to-day in carrying out a sentence. Granting the command—without which there is no Old Testament

¹ St. Matthew, v, 38-48; xviii, 21-35.

² St. Luke, xxiii, 34.

³ St. Matthew, xxv, 31-46.

to talk about — their action is purely official and ministerial.

This brings up, of course, the question of conscience. Can such a command, coming through a man, like Moses, or received by the operation of one's own conviction, as from God, be obeyed righteously? Should it not rather be rejected, as carrying its own disproof of its coming from God? One reply is clear: If the authority be adequate, obedience is justified, nay, imperative. This does not assert that the action is right in itself; but that obedience to conscience involves no moral wrong, on the contrary is morally right. A man may do, or may suffer, nobly for conscience' sake, and yet be mistaken in his conviction. He is responsible for the care taken to insure his conclusions; but, granting that, his only moral responsibility is to act accordingly. Part of his data is the light of the age in which he lives. It may be true, as has been asserted, that an action wrong to-day has always been wrong — in itself. I do not think so; but, granting the unchangeable moral quality of the act, it does not follow that all men at all times have the same material or opportunity for forming a true judgment. We know they have not.

The result of this, if correct, is not to justify a command of God; for, if of God, it does not need justification. The point is that in the gradual education of a race, or in the development of a Divine purpose, the commands of God must adapt themselves to that which is possible to the will of man at the particular time, or in the particular people.

That man may fulfil his destiny, God has given him a will, which He will not coerce. To forward His purpose He will use every method of persuasion, as men use persuasion of many kinds to win others to a line of conduct; but He will not force. Much less will He violate conscience, His own constituted minister and servant. It is inconceivable that to-day He would lay upon us a command such as that concerning the Canaanites, or to Abraham to sacrifice Isaac; but it was through such means at that time, which did not strain the consciences of those addressed, — however much it may have their feelings, — that He brought about the development of Israel till it issued in Christ, with all that Christ means to our modern thought, including aversion to bloodshed.

In their stage of development Israel could not have resisted the religious and moral temptations of Canaan. As a matter of historical record they did not; but the effect of the command was to preserve the sound tradition in the faithful minority. Equally in that stage their conscience, their moral sense, would not be injured by the command to slay all their enemies; for in it there would be no suggestion of wrong. The peremptoriness of the mandate probably indicates that their natural feeling was averse from it; and in fact they complied imperfectly. In this imperfection they may have violated conscience; but it would not be shocked by the command to kill. Centuries later, the Greeks of the brilliant intellectual days of Pericles, Æschylus, and Sophocles, saw in the sparing of captives' lives

a question only of expediency, not of moral right. So the conscience of the Exodus would not be revolted by that conception of solidarity in family and race life, which involved in a common destruction men, women, and children.

Abraham's decision to sacrifice his son¹ may have been the reflection, in a highly religious man, of the religious practices of the land whence he came out. We now understand better as to the deed; possibly it would be happy if we could parallel the will; for, to him, compliance with conscience preserved from moral deterioration, which refusal would have entailed. Let it be said in passing that God's approval, of the will which the act expressed, seems to shed a flood of light upon the expression "Son," in the Triune Name which sums up to man the completeness of the Divine Being; and upon Man's redemption by the atoning death of the Son of God. Abraham emerged into clearer light; the beginning, indeed, of that clearer light which we have inherited, and perhaps too much attribute to ourselves. The act in itself is the same; the man is one; the conscience is seen in two stages, an advance typical of that of his descendants.

No one doubts that Abraham's feelings were wrung to their uttermost by the purpose to sacrifice his son; nor need we doubt that the Jews of the Exodus would be prompted by natural pity, as well as by lower motives, to spare many of their enemies. The command was necessary, and it had regard to the consciences of them to whom it was issued.

¹ Genesis, xxii, 1-19.

These are conditions of successful legislation, of moral, social, and political progress, always. To-day we sum them up in such familiar expression as that legislation cannot go far in advance of public opinion; that laws which have not that support cannot be enforced. The reformer must submit to the limitations imposed by the inability to force a measure too much ahead of popular sentiment. The fanatic will not, and fails. He may help change opinion, but otherwise is not immediately useful.

But, when law is opportune, an immense step is made in giving legal sanction, and imposing legal obligation. What is thus true of human law is vastly more true of that which the conscience accepts as of Divine command; the recognition of an unseen, all seeing, Being which underlies the power of an oath. It may be, for instance, that the commandments of the Decalogue have an antecedent secular history, as some modern research claims; but it is none the less evident that a decisive step in advance, a fundamental change of sanction, was effected by the transactions of Sinai. Jehovah, the lawmaker of the Jews, imposed obligation where otherwise human weakness, or desire, or covetousness, might have failed; He gave sanction to practices with which the then state of society could not yet dispense. It is a very superficial error to see in the institution of the personal Avenger of Blood,¹ of the Old Testament, merely an anticipation of the lawless vengeance of a modern personal feud. It was the imposition upon a particular person of a

¹ Numbers, xxxv, 10-21. Deuteronomy, xix, 11-13.

duty to society and to the dead, — a duty consonant to current notions of right and wrong. The Avenger of Blood is formally constituted an official of the law. What public opinion in primitive development approved, and expected, is made a matter of conscience, an obligation, which it is not optional to disregard. The motive, in which lies the moral value of every act, is purged and exalted. The competency of the sanction preserves the integrity of the conscience; as, for example, a surgeon's sanction justifies a family's consent to a dangerous operation upon an unconscious member. Humanly speaking, the method was the best then available; the organization of society not having reached yet the point of a permanent staff of officials adequate to the particular duties.

We have had the same stage of primitive society reproduced casually in modern times. Vigilance Committees have been the Avenger of Blood, justified before God and man in main idea, not necessarily in particular acts. The evil to be deplored has not been the Vigilance Committee, but the social conditions which made it necessary. The conditions were those of the Jews of the Exodus. The Avenger of Blood then was needed; to-day he is ordinarily an anachronism. Yet should law break down, as in New Orleans twenty years ago before the Mafia, is the anachronism in the vengeance, or in the failure of the law, which looses the bonds of society? Be it noted, however, that while Jehovah adopted, He also reformed. Amendments were introduced which reduced the evils attendant upon

personal execution of judgment, and contained the germ of further amelioration.¹ His command, in short, was not far off, and led upward.

It has seemed impossible wholly to avoid consideration of what are called "difficulties," the effect of which is thought to invalidate the continuity and oneness of the revelation of God in the Old and New Testaments. To demonstrate that both Records are of and from the one God, that in and through both we can have Intercourse with Him, which is our present theme, it is for many necessary to see reconciled discrepancies of action, which to them appear the outcome of opposing principles, whereas they are only modifications due to external conditions. It might perhaps be thought enough to cite Jesus Christ, Who sees no such lapse nor inconsistency. His "But I say unto you"² is not in His understanding a contradiction, but an outgrowth, the culmination of a progress from the Law, through the Prophets, to Himself. But the "difficulties" exist, or are made, and to meet them to some slight degree seems requisite, when considering the fitness of the Old Testament with the New to minister to intercourse with God.

It will be observed that the replies suggested, as far as valid, apply to the so-styled "imprecations" in the Psalms. There may have been in the conditions contemporary with them habits of thought, mental and moral conceptions, not yet outgrown, which rendered such expressions fit means for God

¹ Numbers, xxxv, 6-15. Deuteronomy, xix, 4-10.

² St. Matthew, v, 17, 22, 28, 32, 34, 39, 44.

to communicate then with man, or with the particular person. Many solutions have been proposed by apologists; and to myself they have constituted no insuperable difficulty. Most of us, in fact, have had to see or know conditions, in which a thorough cursing, with all its worst consequences, would not in our calmest consideration seem to overgo the iniquity against which they were directed. Towards that which is wholly evil, whether a deed or a person, hatred is a proper sentiment. It is an essentially different thing from hatred towards a personal enemy; indeed, is the natural and correct obverse of love to God and to good. But there need be no trouble in admitting that, whatever their full justification then, imprecatory words are an anachronism in Christian mouths now; as much out of date as the Avenger of Blood, or the need to extirpate a heathen race because of the moral weakness of a Christian community. If, after two thousand years of knowledge of Christ, we cannot survive such test, it is we, not they, who have so failed as to justify extermination.

Thus again, when arbitrary or misleading action is attributed to God, as being His own originative purpose, and not merely His allowance of an evil will persisting in its own course, as in the hardening of Pharaoh's heart,¹ or in the story of the lying spirit sent forth by Jehovah to deceive Ahab to his destruction,² it may well be that such a refinement of distinction, as between doing and permitting, might not be

¹ Exodus, iv, 21; vii, 3; ix, 12; x, 1.

² 1 Kings, xxii, 19-23.

fitted to the comprehension of a primitive community. It might induce misconception; might, for instance, favor the error which historically has played no small part in the intellectual progress of the race, attracting some of its most brilliant minds, of a duality of sovereign powers in the universe — one good, one evil — instead of the one God, the knowledge of Whom is the message of the two Testaments. The very early story of Joseph and his brethren preserves this distinction clearly;¹ yet it has been used quite recently as a proof of the misleading character of parts of the Bible narrative in attributing evil to God.

Transcending all arguments, all other sanctions or assurance concerning the oneness of the spirit and of the God in the Old Testament and in the New, is the sweeping endorsement of our Lord Jesus Christ, in the words, "I have not come to destroy the Law and the Prophets, but to fulfil. They testify of Me."² "The Law and the Prophets" was a current phrase, covering by accepted implication the canonical "Scriptures" of the Jews of Christ's time on earth; substantially the Old Testament as we have it. His repeated expressions to this effect receive from Him, in the Sermon on the Mount, repeated illustrations; in some of which fulfilment, in the direction of advance, and not at all of annulment, is obvious at once. But in other instances He apparently repeals a law, — destroys; and a mo-

¹ Genesis, xlv, 4-8; l, 15-20.

² St. Matthew, v, 17-20. St. Luke, xxiv, 25-27. St. John, v, 39, 46, 47. Acts, x, 43; xiii, 27-38.

ment's consideration is necessary to realize that He does not. "An eye for an eye," becomes in His mouth "a cheek for a cheek," "a mile for a mile;"¹ but the cheek and the mile are the sufferer's own, his willing concession, not his exaction from his enemy. These are limited applications, illustrations, of His own consummate act: He gave His own life a ransom for the life of His enemies.² God, having suffered from Man deadly wrong, gives His Life for Man; takes to Himself human life for this express end, that He may lay it down for them who injured Him.³ It must be recognized that the Old Testament command was a law of strict and level justice, confining retaliation to an equal measure. It was an advance upon the natural human instinct, strong to-day, to exact more, — to have punishment as well as indemnity. It is plain then that the Old Testament already made advance in a direction which Christ's precept simply followed farther.

Christ's endorsement to the Jewish Testament is that of One possessing authority, a characteristic recognized by His contemporary hearers.⁴ That authority is farther avouched to us by His Resurrection.⁵ If Christ's body mouldered in the grave, our Faith is vain;⁶ we may cease argument. If He rose again, it is manifest that there was that in His Personality which at the least fitted Him to pronounce as He did upon the Old Testament, as a

¹ St. Matthew, v, 38-44. ² *Ibid.*, xx, 28. Romans, v, 8-11.

³ Colossians, i, 19-22. Ephesians, ii, 1-7.

⁴ St. Matthew, vii, 28, 29; xxi, 23, 24. St. Mark, i, 22, 27.

⁵ Romans, i, 4. ⁶ I Corinthians, xv, 14-18.

medium by which God communicated to man, and as a record which He Himself understood and fulfilled. This does not commit Him to the integrity of particular passages or to decision as to whether certain accounts are literal or symbolical. Even in an instance apparently so explicit as His question based on Psalm cx;¹ if we understand Him to affirm by implication that David did say, "Jehovah said unto my Lord, sit Thou on my right hand," we can accept the affirmation as to the utterance, without denying critical results as to the date of the psalm quoted. It is perfectly possible that David may have used the words and another writer have repeated them from tradition. One who has power to lay down His life and to take it again² may surely have knowledge as far as a fact of this character.

To the Jew of that day the psalm was David's own. Christ talks to the men of His time according to their progress, as in past centuries He had spoken to their ancestors; and necessarily, for when He goes farther they attempt to stone Him.³ His statement, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day; before he was, I am,"⁴ asserts at the least that He was contemporary with Abraham and knew his feelings; and by inevitable inference with David and could know his words. If He is not to be credited when He tells us of such earthly things, by what title is He to be believed when He tells us of heavenly things?⁵ Let us have every ray of light that reason

¹ St. Matthew, xxii, 41-46. St. Mark, xii, 35-37.

² St. John, x, 17, 18.

³ *Ibid.*, viii, 59; x, 31.

⁴ *Ibid.*, viii, 57, 58.

⁵ *Ibid.*, iii, 11, 12.

and learning can give; but if we are to accept on Christ's authority nothing that we cannot see demonstrated, let us frankly give up the pretence of walking by faith.

Christ's endorsement of the Old Testament is to its character as a witness,¹ and is illustrated by the limitation which human wisdom has placed upon testimony to a witness's character, — that it must be *general*, as to trustworthiness. Considering the avowed purpose of the Record which these books contain, testimony to trustworthiness is testimony to authority,² — that they are authoritative, — the especial quality noted in the teaching of Christ Himself. Christ's testimony to the early Scriptures, as to their being a communication from God, is thus general, but it is emphatic. The words, "If they hear not Moses [the Law] and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead,"³ sorrowfully in the outcome fulfilled, are as absolute an attestation as could well be phrased to the spiritual power of the Jewish Scriptures; and to affirm such power is to say that they come from God.

The "Rising from the Dead," which had not yet even occurred when these words were spoken, is the summary of the Gospel witness. Herein therefore Christ places Moses and the Prophets on the same plane with the preaching of the Gospel, as a means of persuasion unto the acceptance which is salvation. The incidental introduction of these

¹ St. Luke, xxiv, 25-27, 32, 44-48. St. John, v, 39, 46, 47.

² St. Matthew, v, 17-20; xxiii, 1-3.

³ St. Luke, xvi, 31.

words shows His general attitude, — habit of thought. It not only assures that the Jewish Scriptures were from the One God, and sufficient in their own time to the men to whom they were specially addressed; it affirms directly that in other times the spirit which receives one will receive the other, as equally a revelation from the same God for the same purposes. So St. Paul writes to Timothy, rejoicing that through his Jewish mother he had from a babe known the sacred writings, “which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.”¹ Not only the infancy but the youth of Timothy antedated the New Testament writings; the witness is to the Old Testament and to its general character. Christ and St. Paul give frequent interpretation of the meaning of particular passages, and such explanation apparently must involve specific acceptance of them, not always and necessarily literal. It may be illustrative. Explanation of either kind, however, is no substitute for the general endorsement; this it can neither enforce nor invalidate, unless it can be shown to affect the authority of the speaker, Christ.

The consecutive relation of the two Testaments, and at the same time their continued application to common life, may be happily illustrated by a passage from each. Thus the Old, “Thy Word is a lantern unto my feet, and a light unto my path.”² It makes clear the way, in darkness. Of this Christ’s version is a fulfilment: “I [the living Word] am the

¹ 2 Timothy, i, 3-5; iii, 14-17. Acts, xvi, 1.

² Psalm, cxix, 105.

Way,"¹ not only illuminate the way, but Myself am it. The Person Himself is the Way; His example the standard; increasing knowledge of Him is increasing light. "The path of the Just One is as the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."² The illuminative power, the directive value, of the written Word is to "the single eye" matter of frequent experience; still greater is the Personal example, and immediate contact with the living Word. The connection of the two is not that of mere development, from olden time onward to to-day; but one continually renewed, in its double aspect, to the experience of believers in every age. The recurring exigencies of life bring into play the written words, Old or New, applicable to moments of perplexity or difficulty; and not only does light stream from the words, but the immediate situation itself reflects back elucidation upon them, their meaning thenceforth is plainer than ever before. Yet there are moments and conditions for which no words, however sacred, give account; when the touch is not of words, but with a Life.

For all these reasons the Christian may accept the oneness of the Bible, in that it is a communication from one Person, God, confirmed to us by Jesus Christ, as being the Same who spoke in and through Him. God, who in these last days hath spoken unto us in His Son, did speak also in old time to the fathers in the prophets, by divers portions and in divers manners.³ Like the two dreams of Pharaoh,⁴

¹ St. John, xiv, 6.

³ Hebrews, i, 1, 2.

² Proverbs, iv, 18.

⁴ Genesis, xli, 25, 26.

the two records are of one truth of God. In the New as in the Old we will expect those to whom God addresses Himself to speak and write as men of their time; rather, that God will speak to them according to the rule to which they have attained,¹ of understanding and of life. It is partly in the abundance of these correspondents to whom God addressed Himself, their divers receptivities and characteristics, that the fullness of the revelation will consist; as every subject in the development of which men are made the instruments will receive light from the numbers employed in it.

This, however, affects only the manner of the communication; not its substance. It involves elucidation; not addition to the deposit of fact, much less diminution of it. Progress in science is a process of elucidation; the truths of nature, discovered or yet undiscovered, are its basis of research, and they do not change. If they did, science as a method of investigation might last, but all present conclusions would collapse in confusion. Imagine the results, should gravitation cease to be. Christ, His Person, avouched by His Resurrection,² is the spiritual centre of gravitation which holds in place and guides in movement the system called Christianity. The unsearchable riches of Christ, of which St. Paul speaks,³ are shown in the effects produced progressively by the power which He is, developed by continuous elucidation through the Christian centuries; as

¹ Philippians, iii, 16.

² Romans, i, 3, 4. 1 Corinthians, xv, 13, 14, 17.

³ Ephesians, iii, 8.

electricity is the power, long unrecognized by man, the elucidation of which, still incomplete, we now have around us in forms unknown to our predecessors. A force denied is a force ignored; and a force ignored, as electricity long was, is a force non-existent for useful ends. Alchemy and astrology ceased to exert influence when men became satisfied of the non-existence of the basis upon which they rested.

As a philosophy, or as an ethical system only, built up upon the teachings of Christ, Christianity may play a part in the world; but as a spiritual power it cannot endure in the denial of the Christ of the Gospels, of His Person and His Resurrection. The basis of fact disappears. This basis accepted, elucidation progresses, as a child in and from the womb of its mother develops into the power of maturity. This elucidation, in the Old and in the New, differs from the elucidations of Science chiefly in this: that the subject matter of research and of elucidation in the Testaments is the primary Personal cause, God; whereas Science deals with an array of secondary causes, which are manifestations of God's creative power. It follows naturally that, while we claim for science, and for all good work, the coöperative guidance of the Holy Spirit, God working *with* man's natural efforts, for external effects, we find in the revelation of the Bible something different as well as higher; the Holy Spirit working *in* man, to effects to which man contributes only receptivity and prayer.

Prayer indeed is ultimately a receptive disposition, a disposition towards intercourse; and such disposition welcomes the increase of knowledge of the

truth through repeated experience. Only within a half-century has slavery disappeared from Christendom; but its disappearance was insured from the moment the power of Christ became incarnate, when He took upon Himself the form of a bond servant, and was made in the likeness of men. The end was in that beginning, when God took unto Himself the flesh common to master and to slave. Starting from that known truth, St. Paul's elucidation did not carry him to recommend herein a social revolution; but the spirit of final abolition was in his exposition of love as by Jesus Christ commanded, with a direct application to slavehood.¹ To antiquity this was a mental and moral revelation, which could not but issue in a social revulsion. The leaven wrought through centuries of pondering. To treat a slave as a brother became an act of obligation; to free a slave an act of mercy. Man stood receptive. In Christian estimation, the slave ceased to be only a chattel, and became a member of Christ. To this there could be but one logical result.

This instance illustrates well the effect of Intercourse with God by His written Word, which, alike in the Old Testament and the New, is the testimony, the perpetual manifestation, of the living Word, Jesus Christ. The habitual reader of the Bible is in so far in perpetual communion, intercourse, with God. He is perpetually hearing, constantly associating. As in human intercourse, so in Divine, the

¹ St. Matthew, xx, 25-28; xxiii, 8-11. Romans, iii, 22. 1 Corinthians, vii, 22; xii, 13. Galatians, iii, 28. Ephesians, vi, 5-9. Colossians, iii, 11; iv, 1. 1 Timothy, vi, 1, 2. Philemon, 16.

influence of character is operating continuously; while, more remittingly, specific words fall upon the ear with that opportune force which makes life thenceafter other and better than before. Moreover, understanding expands. Progressive intercourse brings progressive comprehension, and such comprehension is *pro tanto* revelation, to the individual or to the race.

Such advance is not marked necessarily by consciousness at the moment. In intercourse with God, man does not cease to be man; and of that Friend appreciation increases as of other friends, and as love grows,—unobserved. Habits of thought are absorbed, unwittingly; points of view are assimilated; the very tongue of the Speaker becomes more familiar, as the idiom of a foreign country to the long sojourner there, until, as we say, he speaks like a native; what is apter, hears like a native. Nor should we, pursuing this metaphor, which is more than metaphor, forget the atmosphere of the country, which is that of our allegiance; the tonic of being perpetually in contact with, breathing in, the spirit of the living God through the medium of His words. It is a phase, and a condition, of that vital mystical state which Jesus Christ called “abiding in Me,”¹ — the Life of the Christian. The Old Testament has its consistent version: Trust in Jehovah, and do good; *dwell in the land* and verily thou shalt be fed.²

In this mutual relation, in Man’s part in it, it cannot be difficult to trace that element of human effort which we know as Prayer. Spiritual recep-

¹ St. John, xv, 4-8. 1 Corinthians, xii, 12, 27. Ephesians, v, 30.

² Psalm, xxxvii, 3 (Psalter).

tivity is not merely passive. It is an active state; merely to dwell is active choice, involving persistence of effort, — a condition of intense and multifold energy. PRAYER, to which we now pass, must be regarded primarily in this light, if it will not be misconceived; which it continually and grossly is. The idle impression concerning Praise, that it is a form of propitiatory compliment, transfers itself largely to Prayer, in which is perceived merely indolent asking, — a slightly more dignified species of begging, — and naught beyond. But to see in the Bible the Word of God, to recognize its purpose to be the knowledge of God, places the reader who for these reasons seeks it in the position at once of one who asks; asks not indolently, but at the sacrifice of time, the exercise of close attention, — itself no slight effort, — and, as perception increases, asking with an ever-growing play of mind and heart, of intelligence and of emotion, which not only produce results but are themselves a weighty exhibition of natural powers in active employment. Quite independent of the effort to bind ourselves to an occupation to which at the moment we may be reluctant, to read is hard work; and the Bible not least, but most, because of the demands upon faculties spiritual as well as natural.

Our Lord's successive exhortations: Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you,¹ are no mere iteration of equivalents. The successive rises in energy are obvious, when once noted; but though the several acts have a common characteristic, Prayer, the

¹ St. Matthew, vii, 7, 8,

particular manifestation indicates variety of occasion. In serious reading, whatever the subject, one seeks; in praying, one asks; in knocking, one perseveres, importunes, in the face of difficulty, manifesting in intensified form that expectation and desire of answer which is Faith, and upon which Christ predicts an assured success.¹ Faith itself, the condition of successful prayer, is not merely passive acceptance, but active self-committal to a choice of life with all its requirements and consequences; it presupposes, and has been preceded by, effort mental and moral. It is of God, doubtless, and not of ourselves;² but it is so just as a harvest is of God, Who has given the life to the seed, but which none the less presupposes and exacts man's coöperation in ploughing, seeding, and reaping. Prayer, of course, may be reduced to a mere form, often thoughtless, never thought-full; to a bare repetition of words received from others. Even so, as a form, in a day of need it may prove a help to better things. But real Prayer, actual Prayer, involves much more than the act itself, however earnest. It includes all the antecedent dealings with one's self, reflection on conditions, faults, duties, aspirations, which govern conduct of life, and so furnish the material for prayer.

Prayer, in short, is effort, hard work, and in a double sense. It is internal effort, of the will, to bring our own powers, of heart and intellect, and sustained purpose, with all that we include in Faith, into an effectual operation; while externally it sets

¹ St. Luke, xi, 5-10; xviii, 1-7. St. Matthew, xxi, 18-22. St. Mark, xi, 12-14, 20-25.

² Ephesians, ii, 8.

in motion machinery that shall contribute to a result, which may be either within or without. Whether it be for the transformation of character, or for an accession of personal well being, or for some object or some person not in any way ourselves, Prayer is inherently a force; demanding energy for its development and manifesting energy in its operation. So far as concerns the development of character, which is the essence of personality, it is an exercise of the will strictly analogous to every other form of self-discipline, — to study, to control of inclinations, to exertion or self-repression of any kind. That it takes the form of simple words, uttered or unexpressed, and claims to issue in accomplishment of deeds, effecting consequences in which the end seems wholly disproportioned to the means, makes it in no sense exceptional to experience. Transformation of energy is not even an unscientific conception; the touching of a button explodes a charge which wrecks a reef. Prayer undoubtedly claims not only to affect spiritual conditions by spiritual means, but material conditions as well; either directly, or through a series of intermediate causes, as may please God.

But some man may say: How can Prayer thus work, and what is the manner of its acting? We may reverently paraphrase the well known reply of St. Paul to a very similar interrogatory.¹ Cast thine eye upon the processes of nature everywhere around thee. Everywhere is seen life energizing, the work of the Creator, in plant and animal, in sea, and air, and land, independent of man in origin and process.

¹ 1 Corinthians, xv, 35-49.

But in innumerable directions are seen also the same conditions affected by man, not in process only, but in origin also. We have even coined a word, "procreate," to create for the Creator; to which man may refuse compliance. But the work of man is still more evident in processes, — in the cultivated field, in streams controlled, in forces turned to use from waste; utilizing an apparent prodigality of the Creator, which may yet prove a foresight for the days of scarcity threatening the world. Civilization is simply the work of God through man; as Redemption in its broad results is His work, through man's prayer appropriating the abounding powers of Christ's Life and Death and Resurrection.

In the conception of the Bible, throughout, Prayer is simply a Power of God committed to human hands, exercised by God-appointed instruments to ends which He chooses thus to effect, and will not otherwise accomplish. It is a spiritual transaction, a cause which has its promise of result, through the Power which created the universe and sustains it in operation. To what extreme of scope this effect may extend is no more to be defined than is the future reach of scientific progress. The two belong to different categories, — the spiritual and the natural; but they present analogies. Utilized by man according to the conditions imposed, Prayer is Man at work, — putting into operation a force, the development of which requires on his part intense effort and the employment of varied means, not least of which is the knowledge of God, with the obtaining of which we have but just now been concerned. Manifestly, however

great its intrinsic power, and manifold its modes of action, it, like electricity, depends for efficiency of result upon the knowledge and care of the operator, upon his habit and practice. Like the inspiration of the Word, the quality and power of the prayer will depend in part upon him who prays. God's part is constant, as is a natural force; the conditions and the objects of application vary innumera- bly, and with them the consequences.

Thus the greatly perverted proverb, *Laborare est Orare*, — never more misleading than in this hurried day of crowded institutional as well as personal activities, — is only one half of the truth, and that the lesser half. The obverse, that he who prays also works, puts God first in the joint action. "He who works, prays," puts man first; if indeed it does not ignore God altogether. The Bible makes no such mistake. It puts God always first, yet leaves not out man's part. Except the Lord keep the house, their labor is but lost that build it.¹ "Except the Lord" is *Orare*; "that build it" is *Laborare*. "Except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain,"¹ does not dispense the watchman from his task. Our Lord's "Watch and Pray,"² the summary of the Christian's duty in confronting life, equally recognizes both. "Watch" specifies man's peculiar part; "Pray" recognizes God's indispensable contribution. Neither agent is absent from either act; for as man cannot effectively watch without God's help, neither

¹ Psalm, cxxvii, 1.

² St. Matthew, xxvi, 41. St. Mark, xiii, 33-37. St. Luke, xxi, 36. Ephesians, vi, 18. Colossians, iv, 2.

can God perfectly help without man's prayer. Prayer is the outcome, and the efficacious exertion, of man's will, coöperating with that of God. Effort in its proper place is silent prayer; but prayerless effort is not work, but labor.

For God to provide for us without our asking would be to provide without our action. Not to pray is the real human laziness, — expecting God to help us without helping ourselves. His doing so would be equally provision; but the provision a father makes for a baby, not that which he gives by aiding a full grown son to carry on his business. Prayer is work; the power, and the instrument, by means of which a man accomplishes his task. An infant cannot use it, and so will receive unasked provision. A man, the holiest, the most practised, will not use it perfectly, and so may, doubtless will, receive more than he asks: “exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think”;¹ but this does not contradict the fact that in prayer man is working, doing his part, as a ploughman guiding the plough, the appointed part of a man, of whom God requires coöperation, not of a child as yet incapable of work. In this way most truly “God helps them who help themselves.”

This ancient proverb doubtless echoes the misapprehensions current as to the moral quality of Prayer, — as to the motive, and the moral and mental energy constituting it. To ask appears a thing so simple in conception, and so weak in execution, as to be not only inadequate to great ends but, if successful, a discreditable means of obtaining them. I go, say,

¹ Ephesians, iii, 20.

to a rich man, and with no other reason than my wish and pleasure ask him to give me a million dollars. He does so; I should be ashamed of the request, and equally ashamed of accepting. That this illustrates a very current estimate of prayer is indubitable; but the analogies break down throughout. Prayer is very complex in conception and exceedingly difficult in execution; yet, being all this, it is a condition, a stipulation, imposed upon man by God, — or, rather, inherent in the gift of a free will capable of response to God, — upon compliance with which certain results are promised. The condition, or stipulation, taken with the promise, constitute a covenant, or contract; and man's compliance, the compliance of his will, entitles him to claim the promise. It is no mere beggary, but the rendering of a stipulated *quid pro quo*, like the result flowing from complying with a law of nature.

For argument's sake, the case is thus stated nakedly and without a qualification imperatively necessary to proper understanding. As St. Paul puts it, the gifts of God, such as prayer and its answer, are not of debt, but of favor. Man cannot claim as due to his merits; he claims only in virtue of the free promise made by God, and of his own will to comply, shown in hearty effort. Were his compliance even perfect, his claim would be only to a promise, in itself an unearned favor; but inasmuch as with the best men compliance is defective, the fulfilling of God's part, of the promise, is doubly a favor. The extreme presentation of the case, as that of a contract fulfilled, therefore fails. Nevertheless, the justice of God

recognizes that justice is only complete when manifested in mercy; that man, under his load of imperfection, does not receive justice if mercy do not enter into the settlement. There is demanded therefore not the full tale of accomplishment, but the clear good will of the heart. "God is not unrighteous, to forget your works and labor which proceed of love."¹ "If there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, not according to that he hath not."² I do not attempt here to enter into the question of the Atonement by our Lord Jesus Christ, whereby alone, in mysterious way, God is enabled thus to reconcile justice with mercy. To this I am inadequate, and am endeavoring only to apply to the specific subject of Prayer those considerations which redeem it from the reproach of facility, inadequacy, and beggary.

Prayer then is no mere idle offering of empty words which cost nothing. Although in itself inadequate to the benefits it assures, they, like the fruits of the ground, are won by the sweat of the brow, — by mental toil, by steady effort of will, by moral strain, at the expenditure often of profound and exhausting emotion. Of Jesus Christ we are told that being in an agony,³ He prayed more earnestly. Prayer, though inadequate, is as the payment the poor man may make to a physician for the

¹ Hebrews, vi, 10. St. Matthew, x, 40-42; xxv, 40. Acts, x, 35.

² 2 Corinthians, viii, 12.

³ St. Luke, xxii, 44. Hebrews, v, 7. Recall that the primary meaning of agony is intense action, — struggle.

healing he receives. It measures neither the skill of the physician nor the relief bestowed; but it is what the man can. In the eyes of justice it well may be more than a richer man could do, as the widow's mite excelled in worth all other gifts, because representing real deprivation. It is the privilege of poverty over wealth that it can so sacrifice; can offer that which costs dearly. So stands the prayer of the Christian before his God; bare of value, but costly.

Prayer then is effort, personal and internal. It is a causative power. In its perfection, as found in Jesus Christ, it presupposes the high training of an athlete. Consider Christ's training as Man. No bowing of man's intellect to faith, or compliance with the self-abnegations required by faith, parallels the humility which emptied itself of the Divine glory, and complied with the limitations of human nature.¹ The incidents of His career of humiliation, — lowly birth, poverty, neglect, misunderstanding, suffering, the forsaking of friends, apparent utter failure, ignominy, death, — all which things He realized as human experiences, are as nothing to the original self-humiliation in taking man's form in order that He might fully share man's lot and so make man sharer of His happiness.² Such was the training which perfected Him, and made Prayer in His hands a Power to move mountains.

To move mountains is the consummate expression of the power of Prayer, energizing in external effect, as distinguished from its intrinsic force. It is de-

¹ Philippians, ii, 5-8.

² Hebrews, ii, 6-18.

rived from a well-known incident in the life of our Lord, which for illustrative purposes, should here be quoted in full.¹

On the morrow, when they were come out of Bethany, He hungered. And seeing a fig tree afar off having leaves, He came, if haply He might find anything thereon. And when He came to it, He found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season of figs. And He answered and said unto it, No man eat fruit from thee henceforward for ever. And His disciples heard it. . . . And as they [again] passed by in the morning, they saw the fig tree withered away from the roots. And Peter, calling to remembrance, saith unto Him, Rabbi, behold, the fig tree which Thou cursedst is withered away. And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God. Verily, I say unto you, whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou taken up and cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that what he saith cometh to pass, he shall have it. Therefore I say unto you, All things whatsoever ye pray and ask for, believe that ye receive them and ye shall have them.¹

We assume lightly that this assurance of Christ's, coupled with the condition "Have faith in God," is applicable to such power of prayer as we possess in the immaturity of the Christian's life. Having regard to man's part only, setting aside that for exceptional reasons — as in miracles — God in special instances may exert power through means otherwise inadequate, this assumption is much as if one should take a raw youth out of a field, set him to pull stroke oar in a race, and be sure of winning. The imprecation on the fig tree, which illustrated this word of

¹ St. Mark, xi, 12-14, 20-24. St. Matthew, xxi, 18-22; xvii, 20.

our Lord's, took place at the end of His course; and the word is not so much a general assurance, as a specific command to an aspiration. It is primarily a command, upon which the promise is conditioned. It presupposes disciplined energies with a constant mind, — for faith is enduring, — and to such it assures proportionate results; commensurate, it is true, not to the faith itself, but to that power of God which the faith should evoke. We have caricatured the command into a promise, so loosely conditioned as practically to assure an effect without an equal cause. Then, being disappointed, we doubt.

Consider, too, what this caricature involves. The promise, — to move mountains, — whether construed literally or figuratively, is to commit to man a power which in improper handling would turn the order of nature upside down. That man is capable of receiving such power is shown in Jesus Christ; and also is suggested, in terms of human thought, by God's care to exclude man from the tree of life,¹ as soon as he had parted with the spirit of obedience. Imagination quails before the thought of the wickedness of man expanded by enduring life and experience. But in Christ's assurance the conditions are such as to insure fitness to use the power. Faith and Prayer, in the degree demanded, are qualities which guarantee that the exercise of power will be only in conformity with God's will. Such prayer God needs. It is part of His provision, inseparable from the gift of free will, by which He can accom-

¹ Genesis, iii, 22-24.

plish through man that which apart from man He will not — by His own Nature cannot — otherwise effect. At the opening of Christ's ministry, before any miracle by Him is recorded, His course in the Temptation demonstrates Him to history as one fit to have this power intrusted to Him; He refuses to attempt its use contrary to the will of God, read by Him in the Scriptures.¹

It is clear that one who will not yield on such a supreme occasion, under the solicitations of extreme bodily want, will not act by mere caprice; and the instance would vindicate as reasonable His action in the withering of the fig tree, could no explanation of that be given. This seemingly wanton exercise of power receives illustration, and justification, in the subsequent washing of the apostles' feet;² an incident plainly exceptional, not to be expected, and to them at the moment inexplicable, as was the blighting of the tree. To St. Peter's remonstrance He replied, "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know"; and when He had finished, He said, "I have given you an example; for if I, whom ye rightly call Lord, and Master, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet." The act was an example, and an illustration, of service and of humility; and in like manner the unexpected and unaccountable withering of the tree is by Him explained as an illustration of the power to which Faith — in God —

¹ St. Matthew, iv, 1-11. St. Luke, iv, 1-12.

² St. John, xiii, 1-15.

is capable of attaining. In neither case is there caprice; for in both cases there is purpose.

The demand for immediate visible results to a prayer is practically desiring to walk by sight; it is the negation of Faith, the fundamental condition of the Life of the Christian and of successful prayer. Thus the petition is poisoned at its very source. Do then the promises of Jesus Christ fail in particulars upon which so many hopes are built? No; we are not here in the presence even of a paradox, much less of a denial. The condition stated, Faith in God, necessarily implies a complete trust: 1, that the prayer will be answered; 2, that it will be answered for the suppliant's best good as God knows it, as the man himself, if gifted with required faith, would ask, did he also so know; not as he may see and word it in a request ill-considered, even though honest and earnest. A prayer contrary to the will of God cannot be a prayer of faith. The sons of Zebedee ask that they may sit, the one on Christ's right, the other on His left, in His Kingdom;¹ a request which may well have been one of affection as well as of ambition. The reply, Ye know not what ye ask, is applicable to many prayers; probably to most. If a son ask bread, questions our Lord, will his father give him a stone? ² Yet to answer a prayer according to its exact terms may be to do just this.

St. Paul in his first letter to the Corinthian Christians evidently had in mind our Lord's expression concerning removing mountains;³ it was part of his

¹ St. Matthew, xx, 20-23. St. Mark, x, 35-40.

² St. Matthew, vii, 9, 10. ³ 1 Corinthians, xiii, 2.

mental and spiritual possessions. Yet in his second letter, speaking of his personal affliction,¹ for deliverance from which he prayed thrice (*i. e.*, a perfect number of times, earnestly and fervently), he records the denial in form of his prayer, without misgiving that it had failed. "My grace is sufficient for thee, for My power is made perfect in weakness." The prayer is answered; but to faith not to sight. Relief is given; but it is by increasing power to bear, not by removing the burden, a greater result in any sound estimate of benefit. The faith, such as it was in the prayer, is rewarded by an increased demand for further faith; which of itself indicates an original defect, in a man whose faith was great as measured by his works and by human standards. The recurrent expressions of St. Paul in the immediate connection show that he fully appreciated that he had received more than he asked. In his prayer he had sought and found; he importuned, knocked thrice, and it was opened to him. He sought temporal relief, goodly pearls; he found instead one pearl of great price.² Then he appreciated it, sold all else and bought it. His expression to his Philippian converts, "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, . . . and do count them but dung that I may win Christ,"³ takes to their Corinthian brethren an intenser form, Now, "I *take pleasure* in weaknesses, in injuries, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak,

¹ 2 Corinthians, xii, 7-10.

² St. Matthew, xiii, 45, 46.

³ Philippians, iii, 7, 8.

then am I strong." His experience in the instance illustrates our Lord's word, Every branch in Me that is bearing fruit My Father purges, that it may bring forth more fruit.¹

Faith, to be perfect, — to remove mountains, — must at the very least be primarily a belief and trust in God's wisdom and His goodness to man, as well as in His power. Christ's condition is: Have Faith in God. To conceive of Faith in this connection as being merely an intellectual certainty, a confidence, in virtue of which, the man himself exercising it, the mountain would remove at his word, would be belief in self, not belief in God. Faith in God, to one uncertain of what the will of God in the particular instance may be, must carry not only belief in His power to remove the mount, but also belief in His wisdom and goodness in controlling action, in case it would be unwise or unkind to grant the prayer. To real faith, consequently, no petition can be unconditioned; and, indeed, adequate realization of the danger there may be in receiving what we ask, in ignorance of the effects, what Johnson well called "the secret ambush of a specious prayer," would of itself, and to mere human prudence, condition prayers.

As regards, then, prayer being effectual, being answered, the assurance of Christ is precise, the promise undoubtful: "Ask, and ye shall receive." But receive what? the answer your need requires, in measure as you have that only real Faith which trusts God's wisdom as well as His goodness. When

¹ St. John, xv, 2.

a man goes to a physician, he expects the treatment required by his physical condition; not that which his softness would prefer, or his prepossessions imagine. Thus two men may have the same, let us say, trouble, and the one may pray, like St. Paul, for deliverance; the other not pray. It would be perfectly consistent with God's faithfulness in answering, that he who asked relief should not be freed from his infirmity, because it is charged for him with spiritual healing; whereas he who did not pray might be healed of a disorder which fails, and in God's foreknowledge will continue to fail, of the gracious purpose underlying it. God does not willingly prolong useless chastening.¹

Such godly reserve applies, of course, peculiarly to those petitions for temporal betterment which the Prayer Book concisely sums up in the words, "mind, body, and estate." In respect of these, the literal performance to us of our Lord's assurance, "Ask and ye shall receive," assigning in every case the precise thing we may ignorantly ask, would be the substitution of our wills for that of God, abandonment to ourselves by Him, the withdrawal of His fatherly care. A paradox indeed; the utter negation of the essence of Prayer, which is an interchange involving dependence upon and protection by a Power greater, wiser, and more loving than ourselves. Even in those requests of which we can feel more assured as to an answer in terms, in prayers for growth in character and holiness, though certain of the issue, we must be content to wait; to walk here

¹ Isaiah, i, 5. Lamentations, iii, 33.

also by faith; enduring, as seeing that which long remains almost invisible; yet certain, as beholding the Invisible One and His promise.¹ Spiritual growths know their winter time, as well as their spring and harvest.

All reserves made, however, Christ's command remains, and its promise: Have faith in God, and results commensurate will follow. We are dealing with realities, however much we need to guard against facile misapprehension. The command is His, therefore obedience is possible. We can exercise a certain measure of faith, habituating ourselves to an attitude of mind, which tends like all habits to become fixed and to grow upon us; to be continually operative, unconsciously as well as consciously. Putting misgivings quietly aside, we can practise the confidence that what we ask we shall receive, in the very best sense possible to us; the assurance that in prayer we are working together with God to the fulfilment of His purposes, which are always those of love;² that to this end God needs us as really as He needs the husbandman for bringing to perfection the fruits of the field. This the believing know; and they know also that powers, spiritual, internal and external to them, are working with them: the unceasing intercession of Jesus Christ,³ and the pleadings of the Holy Ghost.⁴ But we do not know, and the greater our faith the less we will be impatient to know prematurely, — to see

¹ Hebrews, xi, 1, 13, 27; iii, 14. ² Romans, viii, 28, 32.

³ Hebrews, ii, 17, 18; iv, 14-16; vii, 25-28; ix, 24. Romans, viii, 34.

⁴ *Ibid.*, viii, 26, 27.

rather than to trust, — the manner and the time which God has put in His own power.¹

This combination of assurance and uncertainty, more especially as to relief sought from the pressure of temporal sorrows, burdens, perplexities, has been summed up in lines impressive from the sobriety, quietness, and repressed though fervid emotion, which characterize them. They are by the celebrated Dr. Johnson, a man who knew intimately dejection of mind, infirmity of body, and sore poverty of estate, yet kept faith in God and love to man. The voice is that of eighteenth century piety, — not enthusiastic, nor was the temperament of the man, — but the spirit is ageless. The calm reasonableness of the past is as cooling water to our feverish, doubting period:

“Must helpless man, in ignorance sedate,
Roll darkling down the torrent of his fate?
Must no dislike, alarm, no wishes, rise,
No cries invoke the mercies of the skies?
Inquirer, cease. Petitions yet remain
Which Heaven may hear; nor deem Religion vain.
Still raise for good the supplicating voice,
But leave to Heaven the measure and the choice;
Safe in His power whose eyes discern afar
The secret ambush of a specious prayer.
Implore His aid, in His decisions rest,
Secure, whate’er He gives, He gives the best.
Yet, when the sense of sacred presence fires,
And strong devotion to the skies aspires,
Pour forth thy fervours for a healthful mind,
Obedient passions, and a will resigned;

¹ Acts, i, 7.

For Love, which scarce collective man can fill;
For Patience, sovereign o'er transmuted ill;
For Faith, that, panting for a happier seat
Counts death kind Nature's signal of retreat:
These goods for man the laws of Heaven ordain,
These goods He grants Who grants the power to gain;
With these celestial Wisdom calms the mind,
And makes the happiness she does not find."

While, however, we may not ask to know beforehand the way or the degree of God's action, — what Johnson calls "the measure and the choice," — nor to see results follow immediately, we will fail in that habitual attitude of assurance which we are commanded to cultivate, if we neglect continual watchfulness to detect the workings of God's hand, — the answers to prayer. They are to be seen, recognized, more frequently by far than the careless imagine; obvious, though not superficial. In nothing perhaps is the lesson of the Old Testament more useful to us of to-day, unchanged in spirit and in application, than in the identification it makes of remissness in this respect with lack of faith; of the Faith which is Christ's command to us, the Faith which carries His promise. All things which to the Israelites happened are for our example; but their crucial failure was in not noting the workings of God,¹ and their consequent inability to believe. Faith is compared by Christ to a grain of mustard seed;² the characteristic of which is not only its smallness, but its growth, to

¹ Psalm, xcvi, 7-11. Hebrews, iii, iv. Exodus, xxxii, 1, 7-10. Numbers, xiv, 11, 12, 20-23.

² St. Matthew, xvii, 20. St. Luke, xvii, 6.

a size of which that smallness in itself gives no promise.¹ However small, Faith carries this promise, and it is the potentiality which underlies the command: Have Faith — in God. Though never so little, Faith can grow; therefore to cultivate it is a reasonable command to us, and the promise applies to the growth of the seed till it reaches the measure of the stature of that which Christ commanded.

This is the bridge by which I purpose to pass from Prayer to its correlative, — Thanksgiving. Thanksgiving touches the past and present; Prayer looks chiefly to the future, though in the present both find common ground. I purpose to put aside the recognized duty of gratitude, just because it is recognized as proper, although perhaps less common in us than we flatter ourselves. All admit that benefit received calls for thanks; to God no less. All things are from God, yes; but in the secondary causes, the media through which they reach us, we usually, as a race, lose sight of Him. He is not in this matter in all our thoughts.² The consequence is that things seem to come to us *by* a series of incidents, as they do usually *through* such a series. These carry to us their own explanation, account for themselves and their consequences; perfectly natural, as we say, our own work or that of some one else; a chain of causes, no originating cause which it is worth while to trace. The warning to the Israelites, Beware lest thou say in thine heart, my power, and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth; but thou shalt *remember* that Jehovah thy God is He that giveth thee power

¹ St. Matthew, xiii, 31, 32.

² Psalm, x, 4-6 (Psalter).

to get wealth,¹ may have been particularly addressed to the tendency to braggadocio and ostentation common to primitive societies; but spiritually it echoes the words of the Christian writer, Take heed lest haply there shall be in any one of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.² It is a rebuke to *forgetfulness*, and finds its complement in the other caution to Israel, *Remember* that thou wast a bondservant in Egypt, and that Jehovah thy God brought thee out.³ Forgetfulness and unbelief are twins.

This condition is not so much ingratitude in a gross sense, as it is inattention. Between the two there is morally little to choose, and the result is equally disastrous. How thus shall man have "that *due* sense of all Thy mercies," which the Church holds forth as the motive to thankfulness? Human impulse is to gratitude, in emotion at least, if not in enduring action. Christ assumes this in the words, If ye love them who love you, or do good to them who do good to you, what do ye more than others?⁴ and again, expressly, "With what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you"; "good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, shall men give into your bosom."⁵ In the case of the ten lepers healed,⁶ He expresses surprise that but one returned to Him to give thanks. It would seem not so much that the nine were deficient in common gratitude as

¹ Deuteronomy, viii, 11-18.

² Hebrews, iii, 12, 13.

³ Deuteronomy, v, 15.

⁴ St. Matthew, v, 46. St. Luke, vi, 32-34.

⁵ St. Luke, vi, 38.

⁶ *Ibid.*, xvii, 11-19.

that they failed to connect Him with their healing, obvious as it may seem to have been. There was deficiency of spiritual perception, which is Faith. Their failure suggests thought as to the general recognition of our Lord's powers by those who benefited; their value to them as signs of His Personality. Some approached appreciation; the mass remained blind, and so were easily moved to "Crucify Him!" Though He had done so many miracles, says St. John, yet they did not believe on Him.¹

Failure to return thanks is not merely an indecency in the particular instance. It is evil chiefly in the habit of mind that it betrays, which continually fails to associate effect with cause, the ordering of events with the providence of God, in life natural and spiritual. This is really unbelief, in action; negative, perhaps, rather than positive; but equally effectual to bad, for non-action is action. Failure to act timely is as disastrous as mistake. Where the habit of seeing God's hand in all things is cultivated, not only will the ways of God, the connection between prayer and answer, be evident more frequently, — much more frequently, — but thankfulness will be more habitual because the reasons for giving thanks will be appreciated. Faith on guard, watchful, makes advances towards perception. With such habit, seeing God's works, we shall perceive and shall know His ways; and knowing, Thankfulness will follow, for it is in accord with our nature, not contrary to it. Thus a reciprocal action, essentially Intercourse, will be established, becoming more and more a

¹ St. John, xii, 37-41.

frame of mind, to which inadvertences may occur, yet the mental and moral attitude remain.

The unthankful man neglects to seek God behind the secondary causes which are visible to him. After the event, as well as before, he walks by sight, not by faith. A man finds health gradually failing and prays for restoration. Days, months, perhaps years pass, of slow decline, of prayer seemingly unheeded; then a series of circumstances undesigned by him leads to a change of residence, and with it health revives and returns. Does he in this see an answer? Yet it is open to belief, and a living faith will hold, that the happy end began with the prayer. Unthankfulness is seen not only where the particular ministration comes through a series of incidents, requiring some sustained reflection to apprehend and appreciate; the same will be found where the relation between cause and effect is immediate and direct. A sufferer puts himself under the hands of the surgeon, or of a physician. Does he see in them the ministers of God, waiting continually on this very thing? ¹ If so, the mere belief is prayer, uttered or unexpressed; he is exercising Faith, and beyond doubt will exercise thankfulness. If he does not so see, where is his faith? Another goes to healing springs. He receives the benefit; is there to him in the waters the gift of God, or merely a natural agency? If the latter, he walks by sight; neither by prayer before nor by thanks after will he hold intercourse with God, and so will have lost opportunity for increase in that knowledge which is eternal life.

¹ Romans, xiii, 6.

To him the secondary cause conceals the Primary. Such appreciation of God's working ministers powerfully to knowledge; none the less sure, but surer, because spiritual, — of Faith. Trust beforehand is the correlative of Thankfulness afterwards. Both are manifestations of Faith, beholding the Invisible; and both involve gains of experience, issuing in the conviction of the Psalmist concerning his life experience: They that know Thy Name will put their trust in Thee; for Thou, God, hast never failed them that seek Thee,¹ — a consummate expression of Thankfulness.

Experience of life demands, of course, time for accumulating its data; but there need be no delay in cultivating the habit of observation, nor in seeking the gift of faith. To such a frame of mind, each marked incident that arises, nay, each common day that passes, becomes an occasion, an opportunity, not only to serve God in particulars, but to observe where He is serving the man, is dealing with him. This resembles the watchful eye of Science, bent on a particular investigation. Habit and data will increase continually, by mutual reaction. And what is this, after all, but the "Watch" which Jesus Christ commands? As one will not expect to see immediately, or always, so in the end the conviction will not be of the precise character which proceeds from Sight, in its proper sphere of secondary causes; but it will be equally secure, because resting upon the God-given faculty of Faith, fortified by indications of cumulative force, the stirrings of the veil, the

¹ Psalm, ix, 10 (Psalter).

inevitable inference from which, to the believer, is God at work. Faith here will never cease to be Faith, nor yield place to Sight; but its increasing strength will supply a Rock of standing which Sight cannot give. Sight, resting on things seen, has in itself nothing beyond on which to repose; whereas Faith endures as beholding the Unseen, which is limitless in resource, and it so endures because it comes from the Unseen One ¹ as well as seeks Him in all things.

Thus there is truth in the lines:

“ In each event of life, how clear
Thy ruling hand I see;
Each blessing to my soul more dear
Because conferred by Thee.”

This is not the pretence that one sees clearly at once the significance of each event; but that the habit exists of recognizing distinctly that each is from God; that it is so accepted; ² and that the meaning and outcome are pondered from that point of view, trusting in Christ's assurance, Seek and ye shall find. To such a frame Thankfulness is habitual.

Thus regarded, each life may be to the individual a revelation of God; and like the general Revelation

¹ Ephesians, ii, 8. St. John, vi, 44, 45. These words of Christ, “No man can come to Me except the Father draw him,” are not to be understood in the sense that the Father draws some and not others. They mean that the fact of a man's seeking Christ is a sure evidence that the Father is drawing; without the drawing of the Unseen One no man can come. But He draws all; though some do not heed.

² Psalm, cvii, 42, 43 (Psalter).

which we call the Word of God, the message of the particular life to its owner is to be considered in its entirety, as well as in specific incidents, or striking events. The whole justifies the parts, as the parts help interpret the whole. The particular experience of the individual will reproduce also the general experience of the race, in the Bible; progress, alike in the knowledge of God and in development of character, will be gradual. To the race and to the man there is childhood, and there is maturity; the period of the Law and the period of the Gospel. The special revelation may be so conspicuous as to serve for all men, for encouragement and understanding; but it will, again like the Bible records, be conditioned by the character of the recipient. He alone can fully understand, for the dealings have been personal to him, adapted specifically to his needs and his power to receive. He is addressed in the tongue to which he was born, and in measure as he improves that gift the message becomes more clear and the understanding more quick.¹ None but he can so interpret as to enter fully into the causes for thankfulness; it belongs to no other to question, or to cavil that the conditions have not called for gratitude. Promises, such as "Prove me now herewith, if I will not open the windows of Heaven and pour you out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it";² or our Lord's, "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you,"³ are of a happiness, concerning the

¹ St. Matthew, xiii, 12-16; xxv, 28, 29. St. Mark, iv, 25.

² Malachi, iii, 10.

³ St. Matthew, vi, 33.

realizing of which only the man himself can judge. He alone can know that he is happy, and why. He may assure others, he may so seem to others; he can tell them of his experience, but he cannot transfer it to them. As the heart knoweth its own bitterness, so also the stranger does not meddle with its joy.¹

Relatively to Thanksgiving, as here dealt with, it is apt to remark that the experiences of life, adverse as well as fortunate, if appreciated in the light of the teachings of Jesus Christ, and so used, as talents,² possess a continuing value by developing spiritual character. They are assimilated and made permanent possessions, which will endure for ever, treasures in heaven.³ Losses here thus become gains there; and gain here is transferred and fixed there. But if allowed to pass out of mind, unimproved by attention and recollection, experiences sink to mere earthly possessions, put away out of remembrance, where the moth and rust of forgetfulness consume them. That which might be treasure in heaven is wasted even as treasure on earth.

As treated under the four heads, Intercourse with God is seen to have two sides, passive and active. In Association, which is intercourse prolonged, man undergoes quiescently the influence always attaching to that condition. Receptivity is often unconscious in its exercise. But on the other hand, to maintain this relation in full force effort is needed, and must be exerted. Such effort necessarily takes the shape of a regulated observance of times, methods, and

¹ Proverbs, xiv, 10.

² St. Matthew, xxv, 14-30.

³ *Ibid.*, vi, 19-21. St. Luke, xvi, 9.

occasions, and will acquire inevitably a tendency to repetition, which in result we call "formal." This will be the case no matter how spontaneous a custom, or utterance, may be, or how personal to the individual using it. If an expression fills a spiritual want, it will be repeated substantially as long as applicable. So it is, doubtless, that liturgies have grown. Thus originated, a form becomes like the framework upon which a plant climbs upward; it does not hinder the free play of mind and heart from day to day, as circumstances change, or moods or interest alter, but affords support and guidance in moments of comparative weakness or perplexity.

If human experience of centuries needed any vindication of the value of forms, as embodiments of life, perpetuating its existence and intensifying its influence, the above consideration would justify formal development; whether in forms of words, which are apart from our present subject, or in regulated observances. The latter demand specific notice because of their bearing upon joint worship, whether that be liturgical or extempore. The regulation of private devotion in this respect may safely be left to the earnestness of the individual, evolving his personal methods to suit his personal needs; but united worship, by the groups which constitute social and religious units, requires as to times and methods an agreement, which is a form in the same manner as any methodized action is formal.

The family and the State are Divine institutions in the secular order, in so far as a logical distinction may be drawn between secular and religious. Such

distinction is merely logical, for convenience of thought in considering, and of language in discussing the subjects involved. It has no existence in fact; no proper human institution or activity is only secular, although it may be used or pursued in a secular spirit, a spirit that knows not God. In the religious order the congregation and the Church, however specifically named in different places, or from differing points of view, correspond to the family and the State. As the State is an aggregation of families, yet has its own particular organic unity, so the Church is an aggregation of congregations, yet has a life of its own; a life of a higher order than that of the State, because it is the embodiment upon earth of the Life of Jesus Christ, the form within which that Life is shrined. The churches in communion with the Church of England define the Church universal as "the mystical Body of Jesus Christ, which is the blessed company of all faithful people."¹

Underlying all these unities is the individual man, upon whose worth each vitally depends. Therefore the treatment of the elements of Worship, which in its broad sense covers every act of Intercourse, while properly general, addresses itself immediately and directly to every man in his single self; much as the specific gain in the present Constitution of the United States was, that it brought the Central State which it instituted, the National Government, into direct administrative touch with every individual citizen in matters essential to national life. So nothing stands between God and the man; yet, as with the State

¹ Post Communion Prayer, in the Communion Office.

in its functions, upon earth the Church is God's minister attending continually upon the care of souls, and it is our Lord's direction that he who within the proper sphere of the Church — however that name be interpreted — will not hear her, is by that very act separated from the body of believers, is as a heathen.¹

The responsibility of the individual therefore cannot cease with himself. His own personal value, spiritually, is his largest contribution to the welfare of every social group of which in the Providence of God he finds himself a member; but he owes also a direct participation in the common life of that group, — family, state, or Church. He owes participation specifically in those matters of Intercourse with God, whereof we are here treating; for upon Intercourse primarily, particularly in the two Sacraments, depends the Life of the Christian and of the Christian community. The giving or withholding such participation is indeed an indication, a measure, of his personal relation to God; for as the personal spiritual life depends on such intercourse, — in Sacraments, in Praise, in the hearing of the Word, in Prayer, in Thanksgiving, — so the common life of the several communities of which men are members, depends upon the joining together in such intercourse. From this derives the duty of common worship; worship in common; worship that has a common purpose, whatever the method adopted. This, when opportunity exists, or can be made, implies worship together, assembled, in church or family; because

¹ St. Matthew, xviii, 17, 18. St. Luke, x, 16.

such is a more perfect form of common action than separate worship, however accordant in spirit that may be.

Such gatherings for worship should not be looked upon as a mere aggregation, congregation, of individuals, such as in other spheres of human activity is called a mass meeting. The usefulness of even such methods in men's experience is shown by the continued employment of them; and all have had occasion to know personally the effect of a multitude upon human action, as well as other practical results following the assembling of a number of persons animated by a common spirit, or seeking to further a common object. This alone would not only justify but render imperative Christian gatherings, bound as Christians are to utilize every suitable means to promote the knowledge of God and of Christ, and reverence towards Him. But Christians assembled for such objects are more than a mass meeting. The Life of the Christian is the life of a member of an organic body, which has a life of its own distinct from and superior to the aggregate lives and wills of its members.¹ The life of the Body is not separate from that of the members, but it is distinct. It will continue though any one of them dies; yet, though thus independent, the maintenance of this life in full vigor requires, like the other purposes of God, the active coöperation of men who are the members of the body. He who withholds prayers due to others injures each, and in each all.

¹ Romans, xii, 4-8. I Corinthians, xii, 12-27. Compare St. John, xv, 1-7. Colossians, ii, 19.

In each instance he injures also Christ.¹ Thus St. Paul says, If one member suffer all the members suffer with it; and he speaks of Christians indifferently as members of Christ, or members of the Church, because the latter is His representative on earth, His minister, and yet more emphatically His Body, the body of which He is the Head.²

In deciding to forsake public worship, therefore, or even in careless neglect of a due observance of it, a man decides deliberately to neglect part of the duty laid upon him by God and by Christ, and in so far to inflict injury upon the Body, by withholding his share in maintaining the organic life. This is a treason, a betrayal of our common humanity; for it not only injures the Body itself, but by enfeebling life renders it less able to the purposes of God in the redemption of the world, of which the Church is the appointed instrument.³ Of that life there are several attributes; but the chief essential, the one great indispensable condition, is the maintenance of union with God in Christ, by Intercourse with Him; not by the several actions of many wills, but by their joint action in the one Body. As our Lord says in His last Prayer, covering all believers in all ages: Neither do I pray for these alone, but for them also that believe on Me through their word; that they all may be one, as Thou, Father, art in Me and I in Thee; that they may be one, even as We are One. I in them, and Thou in Me, that

¹ St. Matthew, xxv, 40, 45.

² Ephesians, i, 22, 23; iv, 11-16; v, 24-32. Colossians, i, 18, 24; ii, 19.

³ St. Matthew, xxviii, 19, 20. Acts, i, 8.

they may be perfected into one.¹ Public Worship is the manifestation and utilization of this oneness.

The perfect Intercourse with God therefore transcends that which is possible to the individual. It is found only in the whole Body of believers, perfected into a unity which our Lord parallels with that of the Godhead, and ascribes to the indwelling of God through Christ. That the powers of such a unity exceed in effect as in glory anything attainable by the single Christian would be apparent, were the conception merely human, derived from human analogies, instead of being the affirmation of Christ.² The man who wilfully neglects public worship offends against the Body of Christ; but he also in measure offends who, while attending, falls willingly short of the purpose to make his part in such worship organic, that of a member, and not separate. "I" must be sunk in "We"; and "We" must be conceived as not many, but one.³

To this end those accustomed to liturgic worship should exercise care to comprehend fully the meanings of a common prayer, praise, or thanksgiving. A man's private prayers, if the outcome of religious earnestness, will be understood by himself; but in united worship understanding is essential to perfect participation. Thus St. Paul says, alluding specifically to Christian assemblies, I will pray with the spirit, but I will pray with the understanding also.⁴ Those who use liturgic forms will doubtless profit

¹ St. John, xvii, 20-23.

² St. Matthew, xviii, 19, 20.

³ Romans, xii, 5. 1 Corinthians, x, 17; xii, 12, 27.

⁴ *Ibid.*, xiv, 12-15.

in measure by the mere association with them, being as they are a manifestation of the growth of the Body, the Church, an outcome of her organic life through ages of piety. The association is with God as revealed to generations of suffering and worshipping men and women. But here again Intercourse must be active as well as passive. Effort is needed to perfect comprehension, and thereby participation. Study is requisite.

Such shades of meaning as between "acknowledge and confess," "dissemble and cloak," "erred and strayed," "devices and desires," "declare and pronounce," "confirm and strengthen," in the Anglican liturgy, are worthy to exercise the attention; which also should not allow to pass unnoted such an expression as "promises declared unto mankind in [not merely by] Christ Jesus our Lord." Psalms of daily repetition, like the *Venite*,¹ possess an ordered sequence of thought, a unity of conception, which should be mastered, if worship is to be intelligent. Others have special associations which throw light on their meaning, or enhance their appeal to the consciousness; as does the *Venite* in its un mutilated form. When "I" occurs, as in the last verse of the *Te Deum*, and continually in the Psalms, it quickens sympathy as well as perception, feeling as well as intellect, to hear in it, and one's self to express, the emotion or the prayer or the praise of the Church, the "I" which Jesus Christ has both instituted and constituted upon earth, as His representative. So also in the prayers for all who are

¹ Psalm, xciv.

afflicted, "in mind, body, or estate"; all those who are "in trouble, sorrow, need, sickness, or any other adversity"; in the petitions of the Litany; while one would not indeed exclude remembrance of particular cases known to the worshipper, it is better as a rule to dwell upon the "all," and upon the meaning of each of those enumerated trials; for the "all" are the Body of Christ and members in particular.¹ In truth there is scarcely one of these ills that does not apply spiritually to the Church herself while militant here on earth; though she certainly is not the primary subject of the requests.

Worship by separate congregations is a necessary incident in the practice of the Church, which by her Founder's purpose is co-extensive with the world; but, if exceptional and rare mention of the congregation in liturgical forms may be taken to indicate the mind of the Church, each congregation is to her only a subordinate part of a whole, and should worship understandingly, with a conscious sense, beyond itself, of union with the Church Universal. Each member prays, gives thanks, and hears, with and for those present, not for himself or herself chiefly; but over and beyond those immediate surroundings stretches the long vista of all those "that in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours."² Of the greatness of this thought, of its inspiring effect, of its happy influence in broadening influence and sympathies, there can be no doubt; as there can be none of its truth, nor of its bearing upon Worship as acceptable

¹ I Corinthians, xii, 27.

² *Ibid.*, i, 2.

with God. The imagination which apprehends this is certainly aided in expression by common forms of words, which testify to identity as well as to community of praise and prayer. There is an immense uplift in the realization that as East pursues West, till it returns to its place again, everywhere it finds one continuous voice rising from thousands and ten thousands in unison of word as of spirit.

Between this ultimate comprehensive conception of worship, this supreme reality, and its lesser manifestations, there is no conflict; as there is none between duty to God and duty to man. Every minor obligation, to individuals, is comprehended in that which we owe to God. Love to Him does not exclude other loves; on the contrary it invests them with a double claim. It excludes only their rivalry with Him. Among the whole body of Christians, the congregation and the family are the nearest neighbors to each one. They may be dearer, as one Apostle was especially dear to Christ;¹ and they should be. Their nearness sanctions their call for particular affection. It is only when that particular affection rivals and sinks the greater reality, of the whole Church, that it becomes evil. There is no contradiction between them; they supplement each other.

Especially may this be so in smaller congregations, of the family. The family has this over the congregation, that it is a natural unit, constituted by God directly; whereas the congregation is artificial, though necessary. The family has a life of its own,

¹ St. John, xiii, 23; xix, 26; xx, 2; xxi, 20.

a composite being, distinct from the aggregate lives of the several members; and that life demands both consecration and help from above. It must be sustained by Intercourse with God; and in no wise can this be accomplished so effectually as by associating the worship of the family with that of the Universal Church, bringing each to the support of the other. This is not difficult to do when the conception of the unity of the whole Church has been assimilated as well as realized; has passed beyond simple intellectual acceptance and become a habit of the family thought. It will be aided certainly by forms of worship, when those are accepted and used in the spirit which belongs to them and in which they had their origin; that of the unity of Christians, formulated into oneness of expression and developed through ages of practical use.

It is said that family worship has fallen into disuse, and continues to fall. The weighty significance of this is that the family as such has surrendered Intercourse with God; has with Him no association other than the unrelated efforts of its several members. Without pronouncing on the validity of difficulties imposed by the press and racket of these days, as compared with those of the past, one thing may be affirmed. The difficulty is not one of time, but of family punctuality. It is certain that the essentials of common Worship can be had, without precipitancy, with all punctiliousness of observance, within five minutes by the clock. The reading of so much as constitutes most of the Psalms, or one of the "Epistles," or "Gospels," of the Eng-

lish Church; the ascription of praise in the *Gloria Patri*; the recitation of the Creed; the offering of prayer to the extent of the Lord's Prayer and of four or five of the Collects in the Morning and Evening services, or those for special Sundays and holy days, can all be accomplished thoughtfully and reverently within the time named; and such a procedure not only provides all the forms of Intercourse, but represents every decisive feature of the morning and evening common worship of the Church, as by herself regulated. The morning Collect for Grace summarizes concisely and pointedly every intercession for one another that the Church as a whole, or the several subdivisions, could possibly desire. It brings all to the support of each, and each to the support of all, with the full power resident in the whole Body, starting every member with its benediction upon his day's work.

The habit of thought which fails to seize and hold fast these great realities of the common life is puny and narrow. However men severally may regard imperialism as a political theory, the dominion of Christ is essentially imperial, one Sovereign over many communities, who find their oneness in Him, their Ruler.¹ One Head; one Body, corporate and organized; many members, all together one, but without loss of personal characteristics. The power of the whole, which is the Power of Jesus Christ, is at the service of each, and each in turn serves the whole; but to this mutual service accord of will

¹ Galatians, iii, 28. Colossians, iii, 11. Revelation, v, 6-14; vii, 9.

and of endeavor, unity of spirit and of effort, are imperative, — not only essential, but commanded. This is not merely a great conception, a great ideal; it is a practical reality, the existence among us of an unmeasured Power, the scope of which is purely spiritual and benevolent, co-extensive with all men, but which, like other purposes of God, requires the coöperation of man. Such coöperation must be maimed and defective, so far as it fails in understanding; and it so fails, by so much as each man fails to appreciate the importance of the whole to him, and of himself to the whole. His importance is twofold: what he spiritually is, — his character, — and what he does; and the greatest — not the only — thing he can do is embraced in the common worship. “Lift up your hearts,” God’s appeal through the priest, is an exhortation peculiarly applicable here; and the response, “We lift them up, — unto the Lord,” summarizes that Intercourse with Him which by perpetual renewal sustains the life of the Body and of the members.

CHAPTER IV

· FULFILMENT

LIFE, spiritual and natural, is a means to an end. Its purpose and justification is the production of results. This our Lord calls fruit, and indicates as at once the object of spiritual life, and the test of its reality. "I chose you and appointed you, that ye should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should abide. Every branch in Me that beareth fruit my Father purgeth, that it may bring forth more fruit; and every branch in Me that beareth not fruit, He taketh away. Herein is My Father glorified that ye bear much fruit; and so shall ye be My disciples." ¹ "By their fruits ye shall know them." ² These are the underlying thoughts in the parable of the barren fig tree,³ which did not justify its life by yielding fruit.

The bearing of fruit in due season, and in degree proportionate to the abilities of the believer, is therefore the design and the fulfilment of the Life of the Christian; its aim and its end. It is necessary, however, carefully to keep in mind the distinction between the life itself and the fruit. Intimately associated though these are, in the relation of cause and

¹ St. John, xv, 2, 8, 16.

² St. Matthew, vii, 16-20; xii, 33. St. Luke, vi, 43-45. St. James, ii, 18; iii, 11, 12.

³ St. Luke, xiii, 6-9.

effect, they are distinct; yet being not separate, but closely connected, the mistake of confusing one with the other is easily made. Nothing is more common, or more misleading, than to regard activities — a fruit in which the life naturally manifests itself — as being themselves the life. At best, this they are not; they may be evidences of life, but they themselves are not life; while at worst this misapprehension may go so far as to see in outward actions, religious or benevolent, a substitute for the life itself.

This error is fundamental, radical; and it is also frequent, confined to no class or age. We of the present day are pretty well awake to the specious misapprehension that the spiritual life consists in religious observances, such as churchgoing, and various other necessary devotional practices. We have seen that these may receive extensive and strict attention, and yet be unaccompanied by those inner graces of character which St. Paul calls the fruit of the Spirit: Love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control.¹ This, a snare to other times, and still to some types of religious disposition, is now so clear to us that a tendency has been induced to discard these observances, and to fly to the other extreme, — to treat them as indifferent; whereas in themselves they are good and even imperative, and therefore must surely characterize a conduct that has its source in living piety — filial duty to God.

This distortion of view is perhaps partly responsible for the particular direction our own age has given to

¹ Galatians, v, 22.

religious observance; for by observance of some kind the religious instinct will try to satisfy conscience, will try to find a substitute for the life itself. The religious and benevolent activities, and organizations, styled "institutional," may degenerate into mere outward observance, as readily as devotional exercises. Like these, they may serve to deaden men's appreciation that in themselves they are at best fruit; while at worst they may deceive fatally by taking upon themselves the semblance of spiritual life. There can be as much self-deception in running round from hospital to settlement, from meeting to meeting, as from preacher to preacher, and service to service. The one course as the other may be the outward visible sign of vigorous spiritual life, and profound spiritual interest; but it also may not, and it runs the danger of self-deception, because it can proceed from other causes, may be only the reflection of the prevailing spirit of the times, or of a natural restlessness, or a sop to conscience for deficiencies somewhere. The Angel of the Church at Ephesus is not the only instance of one abounding in works and fallen from love.¹

It is against this specific danger, very real to-day, that St. Paul directed his well known characterization of Love,² which is not only a eulogium of the virtue in itself, but a stern warning that the most strenuous and even self-sacrificing outward actions cannot be accepted as a substitute for the inner condition of Love. Benevolent activities (I do not say action) are as absent from his enumeration of the

¹ Revelation, ii, 1-5.

² 1 Corinthians, xiii.

features of Love as are forms of pious observance. The end of the commandment, as he says in another place and connection, is Love,¹ — not deeds; not that doing is less than imperative, but where love is, it bears its own assurance of being the fruit of the Spirit. There is life; and where life is, deeds will follow, as the night the day. And so the Apostle concludes, Love is the fulfilling of the Law; he that loves has already fulfilled the law.² This is a re-statement of the words of Jesus Christ: Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them; for this is the Law — and the Prophets.³ So to do in all things is only possible to Love; for the application of this teaching is not to particular set activities, usually self-chosen by natural predisposition, but to the daily, contrary, and often unforeseen, incidents of common life, the sole sure provision against which is the habitual inner temper of the mind.

The tokens of Fulfilment in the Life of the Christian are therefore to be sought within: in dispositions, the first result of which is to modify character and temperament, and through these to manifest the secondary results of conduct and activities. This constitutes a series of causes and effects; the first cause being the Life of Jesus Christ dwelling in His follower, as the life of a vine in its several branches.⁴ The special characteristics of His Life — Love, Joy, Peace — will thus be reproduced in measure in that

¹ 1 Timothy, i, 5, 6.

² Romans, xiii, 8-10. Galatians, v, 13, 14.

³ St. Matthew, vii, 12. St. John, xiii, 34, 35.

⁴ *Ibid.*, xv, 4-6.

of the Christian, and will increase by growth as all life does. These are matters of character and temperament; qualities which we do not need revelation to tell us manifest themselves in conduct, which is a very different thing from activities.

Fulfilment is itself a life process, one of continuous growth. It is an interior condition, progressive, caused by the Power that dwelleth in the Christian, inducing likeness to God, confirmed and strengthened by association with Him, which is intercourse sustained. This process in all its stages, beginning, continuance, and completion, is what we call supernatural. That is, it is the result of, derives from, and is perpetually maintained by, a Life higher than the natural life which all men have in common; which they derive through, though not from their parents; and which, once received, is independent of those through whom it is imparted. The Life of the Christian is born of the Spirit;¹ the children of God, those who believe in the Name of Jesus Christ, are born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.² That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.¹ The growth from this new birth, of the Spirit, is Fulfilment of Life.

Common experience teaches us how much conduct depends upon temperament, upon that natural life, the particular characteristics of which in each individual are shown by his moods, his actions, the general tenor of his way. Activities, doing things, are to a

¹ St. John, iii, 3-8. 1 St. Peter, i, 23. Collate St. John, xv, 4, with 2 Corinthians, v, 17.

² St. John, i, 12, 13.

much greater extent independent of natural constitution; a man governed by various impulses of necessity, or benevolence, or interest, can more or less force himself to the performance of a task which he has set himself, or finds laid upon him. It is much more difficult to regulate conduct, which is the outward sign of inward dispositions, native or acquired. The reason for this difference probably is that the activities — the task work — are occasional, intermittent, and in large measure even mechanical, or at least routine; whereas conduct is coincident with every moment of conscious life, and, if controlled, is continuous effort under very varying circumstances.

If this be true, it is almost self-evident that human watchfulness is unequal to the sustained strain of guarding every instant each action; and that the desired result of conforming every act to the highest standard can be reached only when the inner spirit itself is so transformed,¹ for then its outward manifestation will correspond without effort. It is, of course, possible to control conduct, active or passive, to a certain extent, or at times. We all have experience, in ourselves and in others, of subduing the natural impulse; of particular actions which are not the expression, but the suppression, of the inward feeling or mood. But we also know what a labor this involves, where the permanent natural disposition is contrary; or where the opposition proceeds from those temporary conditions we call moods, which themselves depend largely upon bodily conditions, the transient derangements of the natural life.

¹ Romans, xii, 2. St. Matthew, xii, 34.

This conflict is emphasized the more as the standard is higher. Let any one adopt as his own the principles — for in their breadth of outlook they are more than rules — laid down by Jesus Christ in such passages as St. Matthew v, 33-48; or by St. Paul as the outward manifestation of Love, 1 Corinthians, xiii, 4-7, and he will speedily have occasion to recognize that natural temperament at its best confronts them with a strong opposition, which is liable to sudden severe accesses under the pressure of bodily derangement, or of contrary circumstances of many exasperating kinds. Natural impulses start unexpectedly, as it were out of the ground, with a force and vehemence which for the moment defy opposition. They have all the vigor which we instinctively associate with Nature, the difficulty of expelling whom has been expressed in terse and forcible proverb.

Re-action, acting back, which is so quickly evoked by surrounding conditions, unexpected incidents, physical discomfort, human provocation, can be checked effectively and continuously only by a change of nature which shall not re-sent, — feel back. This is the gist of our Lord's exposition of the fulfilment of the Law and the Prophets throughout St. Matthew v, and with equal clearness, though less immediately obvious, in the following chapter. This underlies St. Paul's expression, "a new creature";¹ itself the reflection of the teaching of Jesus Christ concerning the new birth.² The will "to give him as good as he sends," whether applied to persons or circumstances,

¹ 2 Corinthians, v, 17. Galatians, ii, 20; vi, 15.

² St. John, iii, 3-15.

is Resentment, and expresses natural impulse; to resist not evil,¹ in will as well as in act, is the opposing Christian command, and this with inevitable directness goes to the root of the matter by prescribing a change of heart, of inner temper.² The conflict between the two, phrased by St. Paul, "When I would do good, evil is present with me," draws out the agonizing appeal, "Who shall deliver me from this body of death?" The reply is instant, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord."³ This accomplished is Fulfilment of life.

This is a Christian philosophy of life; revealed, but entirely consonant with the clearest conclusions of reason. The realization of it in practice is success in the highest sense, summarized by Jesus Christ in the words, "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness" — renew thus your inner spirit⁴ — "and all other needed things shall be added unto you."⁵ Added, how? By the things themselves, doubtless, in so far as expedient; but especially by a resultant adjustment between possession and desire which, under the name "contentment," all human philosophy teaches as the nearest equivalent of happiness, the supreme earthly good. This adjustment, however, proceeds in the Gospel scheme from within, not from without; from a new nature, not from changed externals. The words of our Lord quoted are the conclusion and epitome of a brief treatise on

¹ St. Matthew, v, 38, 39.

² *Ibid.*, v, 43-48. St. Luke, vi, 27-36.

³ Romans, vii, 21-25.

⁴ Galatians, v, 6; vi, 15, 16.

⁵ St. Matthew, vi, 33.

the inner life,¹ applicable to all times; not least to our own. They agree perfectly with the conclusions of philosophers; differing only, but radically, in the fact that these are speculative, whereas His are mandatory, spoken with authority: *I say unto you.*²

This particular instruction in the things pertaining to Christian fulfilment begins with the words, "No man can serve two masters." This enunciation of a general truth leads on to a specific application, in the declaration that between our nature, as it is, and the standards set by Christianity, which must be fulfilled in us, there is an inherent opposition, which cannot be reconciled by any adjustment in the nature of compromise. These are two masters. Inevitably we will hate the one and love the other, or we will hold to the one and despise the other. Experience confirms and illustrates this verdict. This result follows, whoever be the two masters. The particular opposition in this case set forth by Jesus Christ — God and Mammon — realizes itself in the inner man, in the affections which dictate choice; in anxiety concerning worldly issues on the one hand, or on the other in calm confidence in God's care.³ These cannot be combined, any more than can resentment and the spirit of non-resistance. They may and do coexist, but in perpetual strife; and victory, success, fulfilment, words of nearly equivalent import in relation to the ends of life, can be insured only by siding definitely with one and

¹ St. Matthew, vi, 19-34.

² *Ibid.*, v, 18, 22, 28, 34, 39, 44; vi, 2, 5, 16, 25; vii, 24-27, 29.

³ Philippians, iv, 6, 7. 1 St. Peter, v, 7.

breaking off wholly allegiance to the other. Unity of service is the condition; the scene of conflict is not in external surroundings, moulding them to our satisfaction, which is the measure of success recognized by our nature and the world, but in the inner man, conforming itself to the will of God as indicated by the circumstances of the moment. This does not forbid lawful efforts to better one's conditions; but it does impose absolutely the temper in which such effort shall be conducted. There must be but one master; his standard alone must be followed, and that in quietness of mind.

This requirement, of singleness of heart, is from the nature of things permanent. It cannot change nor relax. But as there is no discharge in this war, so also there is no defeat. Victory is sure; and in that assurance is inward peace, freedom from distraction. The man himself may fail, may give up, drop out of the ranks; but that is his personal failure, the failure of his own will, not that of the cause, nor of the powers which sustain the cause. A member incorporate in the great Body, the head of which is Christ,¹ he will have his own personal experiences in the campaign, his ups and downs; but only by desertion can he fail of his share in the triumph. That share, whatever the particular form it may take, will be to every one the attainment, by himself (in union with the whole Body) of likeness to Christ; a nature his own, but new, and in perfect conformity with the will of God; the inner and the outer thenceforth har-

¹ Ephesians, i, 22, 23; iv, 15, 16; v, 23, 32. Colossians, i, 18; ii, 19. St. John, xv, 5.

monized forever. Conflict ceases with its cause; Fulfilment thence proceeds by undisturbed evolution; the sown seed fulfils itself. To one thus redeemed even this personal blessedness will be secondary to the knowledge that in his new nature he cannot but please God.¹

The teaching of One like Jesus Christ will be many sided, because of the many conditions to which it will be applied; but from its essential unity these many applications will be in harmony. Thus, this singleness of mind is a necessary condition of the Life of the Christian, and it has its specific reward — light: If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.² This is found restated in another form in the Beatitudes: Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.³ The vision of God, knowledge of God, is light; ⁴ the light of the knowledge of the Glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.⁵ The Life of Christ is the light of men.⁶ The condition is purity of heart; and purity is the culmination of the process of fulfilment, that begins in the Power of God and progresses in likeness to Him, wrought and completed by intercourse, till it ends in purity, which is the human analogue of holiness, the peculiar characteristic of God Himself.⁷ Then like

¹ Romans, viii, 1-13.

² St. Matthew, vi, 22.

³ *Ibid.*, v, 8.

⁴ St. John, xvii, 3. St. Luke, i, 76-79. Acts, xxvi, 18. St. John, viii, 12. Ephesians, v, 8-10. 1 St. Peter, ii, 9.

⁵ 2 Corinthians, iv, 6.

⁶ St. John, i, 4; ix, 5; xii, 35, 46.

⁷ Isaiah, vi, 3; lvii, 15. St. Luke, i, 49. Revelation, iv, 8. The practical distinction between holy and pure would seem to

seeth Like; purity recognizes Holiness. Purity of heart is the final outcome of the single eye, of the concentrated purpose; in it they are completed.

It is to be regretted that in common speech the words "pure" and "chaste" are so often used as synonymes. A pure woman means to many simply a chaste woman. "Chaste," however, is a word of significance inferior to "pure." It finds apt illustration in the word "caste," which is identical in derivation. Caste is a European word, applied by Europeans to the system in India known to us by that name. It requires freedom from outward defilement; such as the "common" and "unclean" from which the Jews kept themselves.¹ Such observance is ceremonial and formal. It may have value, provided that it be not merely formal; that the inner purpose correspond to that which the outward observance symbolizes. Forms are good, if they preserve and enshrine the spirit of which they should be the embodiment. The word "chasten," another derivative, applies properly to external correction, — correction from without, although intended to promote removal of the inward evil which truly defiles. With this agree our Lord's words, "That which cometh from without does not defile; but evil that cometh from within does, for from within, from the heart of men, proceed wickedness of many kinds." These really defile.²

be that holiness is a natural, original attribute, — God's Nature is holy, His Being Holiness, — while purity is a condition not original, but wrought.

¹ Acts, x, 14, 15, 28; xi, 2, 3. Galatians, ii, 11-14.

² St. Matthew, xv, 1-20. St. Mark, vii, 1-23.

It is to the correction of such evil within that the words "pure" and "purity" apply. Purity is separation, not merely, nor chiefly, from external contamination, but from evil combined with good in the nature. The derivation, from the Greek word for fire, suggests the illuminative comparison with the separation of a pure metal from the compound, the impure condition, in which it exists in the ore. The agency for this is fire. The result is not merely freedom from external defilement, such as rust, or dirt, which conceivably may occur without serious injury. As Christ says in another connection, He that is bathed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit.¹ Purging by fire removes complexity of condition, yielding a substance homogeneous and entirely free from alien element; that is, pure. To human nature thus refined is promised the vision of God.

In the life of the Christian, therefore, Fulfilment is properly conceived less as a termination than as a process; the result of which is purity of character, shown in singleness of purpose, in the one Master recognized. Fulfilment in its exhaustive meaning will never be attained; for in such sense it would be a progress completed, cessation of growth, a condition not to be predicated of any created spiritual being. Successive stages may come to an end, as in death; but beyond this there will be advance, development, growth, throughout eternity. In that future state of existence, however, we have good assurance that there will not be the painful element of

¹ St. John, xiii, 10.

struggle and internal conflict — “without fightings, within fears”¹ — which is inseparable from conditions here. Jesus Christ speaks of His Peace, which He bequeaths also to His followers;² yet in the days of His humiliation external conditions moved Him to tears,³ and He underwent inward “trouble.”⁴ It is here the common lot, to which He would not be an exception.

We know little in detail of the changes which follow death, but we do know that it is a change for the better. St. Paul says decisively, “To depart, and to be with Christ, is far better.”⁵ He adds here no particulars of circumstance, but St. John in the Revelation does: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord; for they rest from their labors, and their works follow them.⁶ The contrast between labor and work we may believe expresses the gain of death. Development and activity progress, but work no longer contends painfully against the inward grain and the outward harassment. “If in this life only we have hoped in Christ,” says St. Paul again, “we are of all men most pitiable.”⁷ It need not be supposed that in this reflection St. Paul is looking back regretfully upon the surrender he had made, the outward conditions of struggle and hardship which he had embraced, as the Israelites in their hearts turned back

¹ 2 Corinthians, vii, 5.

² St. John, xiv, 27; xvi, 33.

³ St. Luke, xix, 41-44. St. John, xi, 33-38.

⁴ St. Matthew, xxvi, 36-44. St. Mark, xiv, 32-40. St. Luke, xxii, 39-46. St. John, xii, 27; xiii, 21.

⁵ Philippians, i, 23. 1 Corinthians, ii, 9. Compare St. Luke, xxiii, 43.

⁶ Revelation, xiv, 13.

⁷ 1 Corinthians, xv, 19.

to the indulgences of Egypt.¹ The loss of which he speaks, but which he knows he cannot incur, is that of the hope of a future "with Christ." Not to have known that hope — not to have "hoped" it — is in effect to have lost it, by never having it; and this is a loss so pitiable that with it none other can be compared. The application of this thought is wide. Every life is pitiable which, in life motive, gives to success here predominance over abiding with Christ — in Christ.

To this future we may trust to pass, if fulfilment of character has progressed as far as this present life admits. First the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear; but when the fruit is ripe, straightway God putteth forth the sickle, because the harvest is come.² So St. Paul speaks of the fulfilment of his career: The time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith.³ The fruit was ripe, the harvest come. He continues, Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but also to all them that have loved His appearing. To love His appearing is evidently only another expression for St. Paul's former longing to be with Christ.⁴ Clearly, therefore, the fulfilment of reward is the crown; but of what? Of righteousness, completed in character and pregnant of future development. And it is promised — to whom? To

¹ Acts, vii, 39, 40. Numbers, xi, 4-6; xiv, 1-3. Exodus, xvi, 2, 3; xvii, 2, 3.

² St. Mark, iv, 26-29.

³ 2 Timothy, iv, 6-8.

⁴ Philippians, i, 21-24.

them that have loved His appearing. The fighting the good fight, the running the course, the keeping the faith, specified of St. Paul himself, are embraced all in the words "have loved His appearing"; as fruit is latent in the seed from which it springs, and, like that of a tree planted by the waterside, will be brought forth in due season.¹ So is the Kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed upon the earth, and should sleep and rise, night and day, and the seed should spring up and grow, he knoweth not how; for the earth beareth fruit of herself.² The life and the fruit are enwrapped in the plant. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit.³ The utmost of fulfilment, in action, depends upon fulfilment in character.

It is therefore upon the interior life that the care of the Christian must fasten; as he who hopes for the fullness of the harvest expects it ultimately and entirely from the seed, conditioned only by the care represented by ploughing, sowing, and tending. The writers of the Testaments, New and Old, find in the labors of the agriculturist, and in the fields of natural history, their most frequent and suggestive analogies; the contrast between the life of the plant and the conditions of its fruitfulness emphasize God's part and man's part. The construction of buildings in its gradual progress also offers an illustration, fruitful of spiritual instruction; but here it is the evidence of design, in the mutual relation and dependence of the several parts, which illuminates God's purposes: Ye are built upon the foundation of the Apostles

¹ Psalm, i, 3.

² St. Mark, iv, 26.

³ St. Matthew, vii, 15-20.

and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone; in Whom each several building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord.¹ A building represents the realization of thought, but it has in itself no principle of growth. Its development proceeds from without itself, that of fruit from within. St. Paul recognizes this distinction in a passage in which he uses both similes, in the manner appropriate to each.² "Ye are God's tilled land, ye are God's building." As regards the former: "I indeed planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. Neither he that planted nor he that watereth is anything; but God Who gave the increase." Increase is the outcome of the plant's being; given, it is true, by God, but still the effectual working of an inner principle. But the building, while also of God, brings out most clearly man's work, his activities, and their dangers. "According to the grace of God given me as a wise master-builder I laid a foundation; and another buildeth thereon. But let each man take heed how he buildeth thereon." "If his work abide, he shall receive a reward; if his work, being tried, be burned, he shall suffer loss."

Hoping therefore for increase — for fulfilment — let us look chiefly within, upon dispositions and purposes, for indications of the growth which is the characteristic of life. God's works are the outcome of His Being.³ By them we recognize His character; but they are only evidences, they are not themselves

¹ Ephesians, ii, 20, 21.

² I Corinthians, iii, 5-15.

³ Romans, i, 19-21.

either Being or character. If we could know His Nature otherwise, we could predict from this the quality of His actions, as surely as from a fig tree we may expect figs, or from a vine grapes. The spiritual life we have is of Him; and as His essence is Love, from which spring His works of love, so in measure now, and in potency, our life is love. If it so be, and in proportion as it is, it will, it cannot but, bring forth works of love. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit. Therefore we are to seek our fruitage of loving works not merely from strenuous control of conduct, but chiefly from diligent cultivation of character; looking less to outward acts than to inward inclinations as the domain of effort. If conscience bear witness to exertion to bring every thought into captivity to the law of Christ,¹ there is assurance of life; and, as in the life of the natural creation, the increase, which is of God, will follow by a process of natural growth to which we contribute only the nursing care of him who ploughs, sows, waters, watches.

It may be said indeed that this directing of effort upon the inner motive is the precise fulfilment which our Lord gave to the Law and the Prophets, and which St. Paul elaborates in more than one of his Epistles. Christ so fulfilled in His Person. The prophet foretold of Him that He would stand before His enemies as a lamb dumb before its shearers, or as one led to slaughter. "When He was afflicted, He opened not His mouth."² This is outward con-

¹ 2 Corinthians, x, 3-5.

² Isaiah, liii, 7. St. Matthew, xxvi, 63; xxvii, 11-14. St. Mark, xiv, 61. St. Luke, xxiii, 8-11. St. John, xviii, 22, 23.

duct. He Himself gives the explanation, "I am meek and lowly *in heart*,"¹ the inner spirit. He so fulfilled in teaching; for this requirement of inward conformity constitutes the backbone of the Sermon on the Mount, when outward acts, conduct, and activities alike are judged, approved, or condemned, by the inner motive. True obedience is in spirit; except as the outcome of this, the obedience of act is valueless. Obedience may be in act and not in spirit. Our Lord teaches expressly that a man may abstain from murder or adultery in literal obedience to law, and yet be morally guilty of either; but one who is habitually obedient in spirit will inevitably be so in act. There may be falls; but if the heart be clearly willing, the will is recognized and accepted, even when weakness has betrayed purpose.

Of this St. Peter's momentary defection furnishes a complete instance.² What more wretched than the act? The denial, bad enough in any case, was worst in one to whom had been given the light of the great confession: He is the Christ, the Son of the Living God.³ "I know not the man." There is the bald act; but, for all its cowardice, St. Peter loved Christ, before, at the moment, and after. "Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee." Christ did know, and accepted the assurance, the little word of love, in compensation for the whole act of desertion;⁴ just because, knowing the heart, He knew that in it there

¹ St. Matthew, xi, 29.

² *Ibid.*, xxvi, 69-75. St. Mark, xiv, 66-72. St. Luke, xxii, 54-62. St. John, xviii, 16, 17, 25-27.

³ St. Matthew, xvi, 15, 16.

⁴ St. John, xxi, 15-19.

was, and throughout had been, life and love. At the moment St. Peter denied Christ it was just as certain as at any time in his life that in the end he would lay down his life for Christ's sake.¹ The tree could not but bring forth its fruit — in due season. It is mockery to urge that such a fall is consistent with the Life of the Christian, that a good tree may now and then yield bad fruit; but it is entirely consistent with all experience of conflict, of war, and conflict is the unavoidable accompaniment of the Christian's life. The flesh warreth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh.² It is no strange thing that there should be reverses even in a successful campaign. In any struggle it may seem long doubtful which side will prevail; how much less strange that there should be an occasional rattling fall. It is not such fall, but the combatant's courage and perseverance, the state of his will, which contains the promise of victory or ultimate defeat.

If a man love Me, he will keep My commandments, said Christ.³ The sequence of cause and effect could not be stated more positively; the spirit, the disposition, the affection, will result in the conduct. He that loveth Me not keepeth not my commandments.⁴ And His commandments, though in detailed application many, are in substance one.⁵ The first is: Thou shalt love — God. The second is: Thou shalt love — Man. It is not, Thou shalt do; but, Thou shalt

¹ St. Matthew, xxvi, 33-35. St. Mark, xiv, 29-31. St. Luke, xxii, 31-34. St. John, xiii, 37, 38.

² Romans, vii, 18-23. Galatians, v, 16-24.

³ St. John, xiv, 15-23.

⁴ *Ibid.*, xiv, 24.

⁵ St. Matthew, xxii, 34-40.

love. To paraphrase St. Paul: ¹ Do we then make acts of none effect through love? Nay, we establish acts; for love it is, and only love, that can bring forth acts of Christ, as a fig tree brings forth figs. Of this, the whole missionary movement of Christendom, in its many ramifications, is an instance to those who, hearing, are willing to hear. It is what it is, great and imposing, abounding in the fruit of activities, in virtue of Love, prompting the thousands of self-sacrifices, of service and of money for Christ's sake, of which it is composed; but it is not what it should be, because many to whom it should appeal have not the ears of love to hear, nor the heart of love to respond. If such acts, or rather conduct, be constantly wanting, this is evidence of lack of life. By their fruits ye shall know; but this does not put fruits, acts, in the place of love, it confines them to their proper place of evidence.

This, too, is the significance of that other word of Christ's, in close connection with the one just quoted. He that hath My commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me.² This does not say that the observance of commandment *is* love, but that it is an evidence that love exists; without it, His commandment, though not in itself grievous, is most grievous, even intolerable. Who in the moment of passion shall refrain from the irritated word, who from sinful desires of the heart, who shall turn the other cheek, go the second mile, love his enemy, doing good and praying for him?³ Who shall be

¹ Romans, iii, 31.

² St. John, xiv, 21; xv, 10.

³ St. Matthew, v, 21-48.

meek, and lowly in heart,¹ poor in spirit² (not mean spirited)? Who shall steadily return good for evil?³ — unless for the love of Christ. For His sake these things may be done;⁴ or at least, if too often ill done, the desire to do may be there; but there is no other conceivable reason satisfactory to our common sense. This or that argument of expediency, bearing on the future, may be adduced; but their general impotence is known. It is questionable whether such control pays; but, even granting it does in the long run, no one knows that the long run will be allowed him. Upon the whole, as observation shows, a present gratification of impulse is worth a dozen future considerations. Love for Christ is such present impulse. It alone, as an inward motive, consecrates action; and it alone is to the believer both motive and reward.

Deeds, the effect of which is beneficent, may thus become intrinsically valueless because done from a worthless motive,⁵ or from one secondary to the love of Christ. To take the highest example, works of pure benevolence, unselfish in motive, fall short of Christ's standard, of that fulfilment which is the crown of the Christian's Life, if done without reference to Him. He that loveth even father or mother, wife or child, more than Me, is not worthy of Me.⁶ This naming of the nearest of neighbors, the closest

¹ St. Matthew, xi, 29, 30.

² *Ibid.*, v, 3.

³ *Ibid.*, v, 45. St. Luke, vi, 27-36. Romans, xii, 19-21.

⁴ 2 Corinthians, v, 14, 15. 1 Corinthians, x, 31; xv, 17-19, 32. Philippians, iii, 7-14. Colossians, iii, 17. 1 St. Peter, i, 8, 9; iv, 11.

⁵ St. Matthew, vi, 1, 2, 5, 6, 16-18.

⁶ *Ibid.*, x, 37. St. Luke, xiv, 26.

of kin, those having the very first claim on our good offices, shows that no motive is accepted apart from love to Him. Benevolence, kindness, family affection, are but natural qualities, the exercise of which is pleasant to the possessor; to exert them, when not too great an effort of self-sacrifice, is a present gratification. The very publicans love those who love them.¹ Though fallen, mankind still remains keenly sensible to appeals to sympathy and to moral considerations, and finds pleasure in answering to them. If there were not these and kindred qualities in man, there would be nothing to respond to the message of Christ, which is addressed to the sympathies and the moral sense.

Daily life bears constant testimony to the abundant existence of this raw material of good dispositions, just as it does to opposite characteristics, and to all the long array of evil incentives summarized under the words, "the world, the flesh, and the devil." The widespread existence of the estimable qualities, so that scarcely any man is wholly without them, must be fully admitted, and the benefit of the deeds issuing from them must be recognized; but in themselves alone they indicate simply that man has been by God created in His own image.² They do not necessarily prove that the individual action proceeds from any motive which has in it the seed of spiritual advance, towards the full restoration of that image. On the contrary, observation demonstrates that they

¹ St. Matthew, v, 46.

² Genesis, i, 26, 27; v, i; ix, 6. 1 Corinthians, xi, 7. St. James, iii, 9.

often rise no higher than kindly impulse, often alloyed with tendencies of self-pleasing far from admirable. In rebuking ostentatious benevolence as well as ostentatious piety, Christ does not confine Himself to censure of ostentation. He indicates in each connection the one consecrating motive: Thy Father which seeth in secret ¹ — penetrating not only the secrecy of the act but the secret of the heart.² In precise conformity with this, our Lord also selects for special commendation small acts, unknown acts, done in God's Name. Familiar instances are those of the widow's two mites, and "the cup of cold water because ye are Christ's."³

The contrast between acts and the inner spirit which prompts them is emphasized in the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican.⁴ The works of the one were self-sacrificing and large. How many to-day exercise such self-restraint as is implied in fasting twice in the week, and giving a tenth of all their income? The other, so far as appears, like St. Peter in his repentance, brought no outward offering but words. "God be merciful to me a sinner." Yet this is accepted and preferred. The sacrifice of God is a broken spirit; within, not without. That attained, but not before, the Psalmist brings the sacrifices to which works of benevolence are a present equivalent.⁵

It was probably St. Paul's experience as a Pharisee

¹ St. Matthew, vi, 4, 6, 18.

² Hebrews, iv, 12, 13. Psalm, cxxxix, 1-12.

³ St. Matthew, x, 40-42. St. Mark, ix, 41.

⁴ St. Luke, xviii, 9-14.

⁵ Psalm, li, 17-19.

that gives such vigor and reiteration to his contrast between Faith and Works. The opposition between these is in his apprehension that between the interior spirit and external observance, even when observance is of the clearest and most imperative moral obligations. His enumeration to the Philippians¹ of his advantages as a Pharisee was no occasional utterance, but the recollection of a vivid past, often alluded to at other times.² In the righteousness of the law, which was chiefly in outward act and observance, he found himself blameless, like the Pharisee of Christ's parable; but when confronted with the command to interior conformity, "Thou shalt not covet," he recognized an impossibility,³ which, to use his own word, "slew" him. "The commandment which was ordained to life I found to be unto death," until in Christ he learned the end of the law by its fulfilment for him, and ultimately in him. There was the command, and there the impossibility of obedience. This meant death, but for the Deliverer, Who took upon Himself all the guilt, and fulfilled for all men the obligation. His Life, the Life of Christ, interior, hid with God, is thenceforth that of St. Paul, converting weakness into strength, impossibility into possibility. This is effected through Faith, an inward disposition. Thus the Law was to St. Paul the tutor to bring him to Christ.

¹ Philippians, iii, 4-7.

² Acts, xxii, 3, 4, 5, 19, 20; xxiii, 6; xxvi, 4-7, 9-12. 2 Corinthians, xi, 21, 22. Galatians, i, 13, 14.

³ Romans, vii, 7-11.

The Commands of Jesus Christ are also "Laws," but the most characteristic are addressed, like "Thou shalt not covet," to the interior disposition; they pierce to the thoughts and intents of the heart.¹ For example, "Be not anxious."² He who seeks to obey will find, like St. Paul, that he is incapable of full obedience, is carnal, sold under sin;³ and that the law being spiritual will slay him. Only through death, to self, will he pass to life in Christ; out of weakness be made strong.⁴

All this is, of course, but the reiteration of the moral axiom that the value of an action is in its motive, which needs in this connection to be reinforced by a corollary, itself an axiom in that it scarcely needs demonstration, viz.: that the choice of a motive lower than the highest known is a moral dereliction. That this much is true is not merely axiomatic, self-evident; there is the further consideration that action will be proportioned to motive, and that he who is swayed by an impulse lower than the highest — that is, the strongest — will be less fruitful in the good deeds themselves, as well as defective in character. Appeal may be made confidently to history that, in proportion to means possessed, the motive, "because ye belong to Christ," applicable to all mankind, has been and to-day is vastly more fruitful in deeds than are any natural impulses of kindness or generosity. It has a stronger power of initiative. The mites of the widow, the cups of cold water, the self-denials of moderate circumstances, unknown

¹ Hebrews, iv, 12.

² St. Matthew, vi, 25, 31.

³ Romans, vii, 14.

⁴ Hebrews, xi, 34.

to man but known to God, have never ceased pouring into the treasury of Christ.

In like secrecy — in the interior life known only to Him Who seeth in secret — is wrought out much of that duty of love to God, which is even greater than benevolence, love to man. The duty of piety, of the filial relation of love to God in Christ, is the first and great commandment. The poor are not only they who have little money. There are also the poor in native good dispositions, whose hearts know their own bitterness; who fain would in temper, in love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, meekness, self-control, give to Christ abundantly, if only they could; who from the poverty of a weak, or an arid, or a perverse nature, can give only the rare cup of cold water, wring the few mites of kindly impulse, realize here and there something of love, not in bare act, which is cheap, but in that steady burning purpose which is life and light. All men share this evil state, if they did but know; but when known and felt, it brings its own hope. The first promise of the Beatitudes, the first utterance of the Sermon on the Mount, is to those conscious of inward poverty. Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven;¹ a Kingdom within,² which is not of outward observance, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.³ The very sorrow over disabilities of temper and disposition, if the motive of the sorrow be for Christ, carries His assurance

¹ St. Matthew, v, 3.

² St. Luke, xvii, 20, 21. I Corinthians, iii, 16, 17; vi, 19.

³ Romans, xiv, 17.

of success: Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted, — strengthened; Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.¹

Like evil in general, the existence of weakness is a mystery; but it is one with which the word of God deals with peculiar directness and clearness. That all characters have weak as well as strong points is a matter of general observation. Strength itself is often a weakness; “the defects of one’s qualities” is a saying as shrewd as it is cynical. Indeed, the man strong of will and purpose runs risk of being weakest, deceived by the strength which in mastering persons and conditions masters also himself. Every character is as a dominion which has its rich and its waste places. Both are to be possessed for Christ; the one to be improved, the other to be redeemed. It is a work of patience, but the promise is sure. In your patience ye shall win your souls,² shall enter into possession of all the faculties of your personality, till even the wilderness and the solitary place shall blossom as the rose;³ but all that it may be for the service of Christ.

Suffering is an incident of weakness; and that the Son of God was made perfect by suffering⁴ indicates the purpose of weakness in the scheme of redemption, which is the fulfilment of man’s character as a spiritual being. Much of our weakness is from sin,

¹ St. Matthew, v, 4, 6.

² St. Luke, xxi, 19. Hebrews, xii, 1–11. St. James, i, 2–4, 12.

³ Isaiah, xxxv, 1, 2.

⁴ Hebrews, v, 8–10.

sinful; but that He Who knew no sin¹ knew weakness shows that weakness not only is not necessarily sin, but that it is a condition necessary to ultimate perfection. This the Old Testament announced in words adopted by the New: Thou madest man lower than the angels; Thou didst crown him with glory and honor.² These are the two stages, connected as means and result. They are spoken primarily of Christ, of His humiliation and His victory; but His humiliation was in making Himself one with us,³ and in that union His victory becomes in all its stages that of universal mankind, if true to Him: crucified with Him, dead with Him, risen with Him, ascended with Him.

In respect of weakness, St. Paul is explicit as to his own experience,⁴ which in general character is that of all men. It matters not what was the thorn in the flesh of which he speaks. Whatever it was, it was felt as weakness. In his spirit he felt poverty; he therein bore his share of the humiliation of Christ, filling up on his part that which was lacking of the afflictions of Christ.⁵ To his prayer for deliverance, he received the answer that God's strength is made perfect in weakness. This implies not merely the remedial effect of God's strength; it implies also that weakness is appointed by God as a necessary incident to the perfection of character. Had it been

¹ 2 Corinthians, v, 21. Hebrews, iv, 15; vii, 26. 1 St. Peter, ii, 22. 1 St. John, iii, 5.

² Psalm, viii, 4-6. Hebrews, ii, 5-8.

³ Hebrews, ii, 11-18.

⁴ 2 Corinthians, xii, 7-10.

⁵ Colossians, i, 24.

merely a cross, St. Paul might have confined his attitude to that of acceptance; but he finds in it more. He thenceforth takes pleasure in weaknesses, in injuries, in necessities, in distresses, for Christ's sake; he glories in them, that the power of Christ may rest upon him. Weakness is not merely God's opportunity. It is his method and means for elaborating a nature superior to that which would be possible to one created perfect in strength.

Weaknesses of natural character therefore are to be greeted; not as something in themselves good, but as occasion, opportunity. It is necessary to distinguish always between acts of weakness, and the fact, or condition, of a native weakness in the character. The act is culpable, more or less, for it results from the coöperation or acquiescence of the will. Where the will is pure, the weakness cannot prevail; and the very fact of resistance intensifies the struggle and the suffering. As Christ's Will not to sin was absolute, He suffered in resistance¹ beyond all men; but His example shows that, if utilized by man in watchfulness and prayer, suffering is God's opportunity also for uplifting to heights not otherwise attainable. "When I am weak, then am I strong." Ordinary experience will tell us that no progress is harder than contention with a native deficiency, whether of courage, or of gentleness, or of decision, or of resoluteness, or in anxiousness, or in over-confidence.

There are many oppositions of these kinds; but they all bear the common stamp of weakness, mani-

¹ St. Luke, xxii, 44. Hebrews, ii, 18; iv, 15; v, 7, 8.

fested outwardly in conduct. There is no sharper test of real character than persistent battling with these natural infirmities; and persistence, constancy, is the fruit by which the essential goodness of the tree is known. "He that goeth on his way weeping, but bearing forth good seed, shall doubtless come again with joy and bring his sheaves with him."¹ So little progress, so much discouragement; frequent outward failure, rare gleams of success in spirit, however acts may be controlled; but still going on his way, not halting, nor slacking in effort. Earnestness such as this, from its very reality, finds it impossible to reach its ideal, but in the end it will. So Browning writes:

For hence — a paradox
Which comforts while it mocks —
Shall life succeed in that it seems to fail.

For encouragement, the Christian must remember constantly that the growth is not of himself, but of God. It is the outcome, the natural development and fruit bearing, the fulfilment of the Life given him; of the Life of Christ within him. He grows and will bear fruit as a branch of the Vine;² and the process therefore will be governed by the laws of normal growth, in due season,³—first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn.⁴ Perfectly clear intellectual apprehension of this law is not indeed indispensable to the issue, as consciousness is not essential to the life of an organism; but when understood

¹ Psalm, cxxvi, 5, 6 (Psalter).

² St. John, xv, 1-6.

³ Psalm, i, 2, 3.

⁴ St. Mark, iv, 28, 29.

and appreciated the light of good cheer is shed upon the slowness of progress. Comprehension has also the advantage which intelligent grasp of principles has upon effort, that of skilled work over unskilled, giving direction to exertion and patience to waiting. So the husbandman waiteth for the fruits of the earth and has long patience for them, till he receive the early and the later rain.¹ Patience in no wise dispenses from labor, for spiritual toil is the condition of successful spiritual husbandry; but it places the longed-for increase where St. Paul places it, — with God. His is the life, man's the tendance only. Further, one who has realized these conditions will be perpetually on guard, watching for the advance, for the blade and the ear, seeing in them not the results of his own work, but the evidence of life working, cheering him with the hope of the harvest, of the full corn in due season; and the spirit of trust will find cause for thanksgiving, in evidences gradual but perceptible.

Normal healthy life is unconscious of the processes by which it is maintained and developed. In being, doing, and undergoing, whether pain or pleasure, we are conscious of living; but the processes of physical life, continuous from birth to death, go on without necessary consciousness, and in function are independent of our will. We can minister to them, and must do so; but ministration is not life. Only when derangement enters do the vital processes force themselves on our consciousness. Of these processes,

¹ St. James, i, 2-4; v, 7, 8. 1 Corinthians, xv, 58. Galatians, vi, 9. St. Luke, xxi, 19 (Revised Version).

growth in its broadest sense is the leading characteristic; and growth is momentarily imperceptible. We see that a child or plant has grown; we recognize that change has taken place in ourselves; but, except where derangement occurs, it is the result that is noted, not the process. It is quite so in spiritual life. We are conscious of derangements; of temptation, of faults, of weakness; but we are not similarly conscious of growing. We minister by watchfulness, by sacraments, prayer, thanksgiving, — by all means of intercourse with God, — as to the natural body by care, food, surroundings; but growth, advanced or retarded as these precautions are observed or neglected, continues steadily by virtue of the inner principle of life — union with God in and through Jesus Christ. Then from time to time attention is arrested, and we note that there has been growth. We wake up, as it were, and find advance towards likeness to God; perhaps as the tiny blade when it first breaks through the soil, and we rejoice. When I wake up after Thy likeness, I shall be satisfied with it.¹

It is good, says the prophet, that a man bear the yoke in his youth; that he both hope and patiently wait for the salvation of God.² It is good, for youth is strong to endure; it is also good, because youth especially needs discipline. From age, more or less, will naturally be expected the tokens of fulfilment; lapse of time should afford greater evidence of growth. But, here again, fulfilment of life must be sought within. Men light a candle, said our Lord,

¹ Psalm, xvii, 15 (Psalter).

² Lamentations, iii, 26, 27.

and set it on a candlestick, that they who enter in may see the light; it shineth to all who are in the house.¹ Entering in is the condition. God enters in, and the man himself; doubtless also the great cloud of unseen witnesses,² and those on earth who by intimacy and sympathy have opportunity to see. This light is the recompense of faithfulness continued to old age. In this sense, St. John twice addresses the old under the title of "fathers." I write unto you, fathers, because ye know Him Who is from the beginning.³ This is their fruitage — knowledge of God in Christ; the knowledge of experience; a result which St. Peter couples with growth in grace as the supreme outcome of the Life of the Christian: Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.⁴ In logical recognition of the differing stages of life St. John gives a very different charge to those in the prime and vigor of manhood; to whom the burden of bodily weakness with its privilege of rest is not yet come. I write unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the Word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the evil one. The word of God abiding in the exercise of manhood's strength carries with it the assurance to old age of that advanced knowledge of God which is life and peace.

To know Christ is light, which grows with experience. In Him is life, and the life, known,⁵ is the

¹ St. Luke, viii, 16; xi, 33. St. Matthew, v, 15.

² I Corinthians, iv, 9. Hebrews, xii, 1.

³ I St. John, ii, 13, 14.

⁴ 2 St. Peter, iii, 18.

⁵ Romans, x, 14.

light of men.¹ I am the Light of the World.² Nor is it wresting the difficult words of the prophet from their special bearing to apply them to the end of life here on earth, as struggles and disappointments, perplexities and fears, draw to a close: There shall be one day known unto the Lord; not day and not night; but it shall come to pass that at evening time there shall be light.³ Not day, and not night. Not yet the perfected vision of him who has departed and is with Christ, but yet the light which has been shining with increasing intensity, "more and more," towards the perfect day;⁴ intermediate, as it were, between the starlight of Faith⁵ and the daylight of His appearing.⁶

Such light had St. Paul, who in mid career labored lest with all his activities for Christ he might be a castaway;⁷ but when evening time came, he knew that he had fought a good fight, and won the crown.⁸ The heat of the struggle, when men are strong in youth, needs not this light so much as does the feebleness of age; nor is the time of vigorous action, preoccupied with activities even the worthiest, as fitted for the calm reflection which in age facilitates and shelters the burning of the flame. There is a time for everything. As thy day so shall thy strength be,⁹ proportionate to the demands upon it. I will

¹ St. John, i, 4. ² Corinthians, iii, 18; iv, 6.

² St. John, viii, 12; ix, 5; xii, 35, 36, 46.

³ Zechariah, xiv, 6, 7.

⁴ Proverbs, iv, 18.

⁵ St. Matthew, ii, 1-10. Revelation, xxii, 16.

⁶ Malachi, iv, 2. St. Luke, i, 78.

⁷ 1 Corinthians, ix, 27.

⁸ 2 Timothy, iv, 7, 8.

⁹ Deuteronomy, xxxiii, 25.

not leave thee nor forsake thee.¹ Action needs light to guide effort; and it finds it in the example and words of Christ, as it finds impulse in love for Christ. These are sufficient for the time of battle; a war cry when the dust of the contest darkens the sky, and the shoutings of the contending hosts fill the air. A man then can but snatch his moments of refreshment, seeking "refuge under the shadow of Thy wings until the tyranny of combat be overpast."² His duty is in the field, wherever by the Providence of God he finds himself stationed.

Old age is one of the stages in fulfilment. It is a time when cessation of effort in measure is imposed; when men increasingly rather live than act, in the common sense of the word "act." But living, being, is intrinsically a higher condition than doing; the life is more than the meat; as the man is, so is his strength. Old age is the harvest of what the man is; the reaping of what he has become during the period when life was manifesting itself in action. As he ceases from his labors, his works follow him. Character achieved becomes fruition, and he brings forth more abundantly, sheds light greater and more effectual, in virtue of what he is and of what he has undergone. The light is for him, but not only nor chiefly for him; its great virtue is that it is in him. It is the supreme fulfilment of the assurance, My strength is made perfect in weakness; that the more the weakness, the more urgent the occasion, the greater the opportunity and the greater the compensating power.

¹ Deuteronomy, xxxi, 6. Hebrews, xiii, 5, 6.

² Psalm, lvii, 1 (Psalter).

Let it not, however, be imagined, as is very easily done, that the perfecting of strength in weakness means the removal of weakness; the substitution, as it were, of strength for weakness. The weakness of age is physical weakness, the culmination of which is the last weakness — St. Paul's "last enemy" ¹ — death. Death is the extreme expression of weakness. Upon it Jesus Christ fastens to illustrate the value of weakness as a means to fulfilment: Except a grain of wheat fall into the earth and die, it abideth by itself alone; but if it die, it beareth much fruit.² Weakness of age shows itself in body, brain, and nerves. It is incurable; and the resultant conditions will seek to manifest themselves in inward spirit and in outward conduct, constituting an inevitable struggle. As the physical energies slacken, the forces dependent upon them, as well resistant as aggressive, relax; and the natural desire increases that external circumstances shall conform to those of the rich man in the parable: Soul, take thine ease; all things now are so that rest is assured for the years that remain.³ But the time for rest is not yet,⁴ nor is here the place. The promise to the present distress is not rest, much less ease, but peace⁵ and inward strength.⁶

The greater the force of spiritual character acquired in life, the more arduous is this conflict, the severer the trial. Of the highest spiritual character, of the spotless human nature of Jesus Christ, it is

¹ 1 Corinthians, xv, 26.

² St. John, xii, 24.

³ St. Luke, xii, 16-20.

⁴ Hebrews, iv, 1-11.

⁵ St. John, xiv, 27; xvi, 33. Philippians, iv, 7.

⁶ Isaiah, xl, 28-31. 2 Corinthians, iv, 8-16.

particularly written that, being tried, — tempted, — He *suffered*.¹ His Peace, the Peace of God, passeth understanding² for the very reason that, while we know not how it comes, it abides and sustains in the extremity of trial; such as His Passion, when the intensity of suffering, mental and physical, of repugnance to the experience before Him, did not prevail over serenity and self-possession. The stages of the struggle, marked by such expressions as, “Ye shall be scattered, . . . and leave Me alone; and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me;”³ or again, “Peace I leave with you; My Peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you,”⁴ show the source and character of the peace, that it was of God, and not that tranquillity of ease which the world takes for peace.

In the forsaking, and in the bodily exhaustion of that night, — as of the fasting in the wilderness, — Jesus Christ learned by experience the weaknesses which are characteristic of age, although He did not live to be old. Tempted thus in all respects like us, He triumphed; being therein made perfect. This was the supreme test of weakness and of character, to which for His brethren old age with its partings and infirmities constitutes the nearest parallel. And it can be readily appreciated that while on the one hand trial — weakness — abounds, on the other, grace — strength — will much more abound;⁵ for not only will God’s strength then be made perfect,

¹ Hebrews, ii, 18; iv, 15.

² Philippians, iv, 7.

³ St. John, xvi, 32.

⁴ *Ibid.*, xiv, 27.

⁵ Romans, v, 20.

but in a faithful follower He will find an instrument more highly tempered than ever before, wherewith to work His Will to perfection of character. It is the time of harvest; the full corn following the blade and the ear.

Consider what the strength of the young man, exercised in its day, brings to old age. No chastening, says the Apostle, seems for the present joyous, but grievous; nevertheless, afterwards, it worketh the acceptable fruit of righteousness to him who is exercised thereby.¹ Character strengthened by discipline is a familiar thought and a not infrequent experience; but in the Life of the Christian there has been more and deeper than discipline. There has been the process of spiritual life working in and through repeated endeavors; season succeeding season, as year succeeds year in the natural life. Each has brought its allotted measure of advance on the lines laid down by the providential ordering of God; fidelity to which, in watchfulness and prayer, gives accuracy and precision to the efforts of the husbandman. Rain and sunshine, the fit symbols of God's part,² the appointed sorrow and joy, success and disappointment, have done their alternate work, seconded by that diligent care which St. Paul speaks of as planting and watering.³

As each period passes, and task accomplished is succeeded by task to be done, the past sinks into the ground of character, enriching the soil; so that product may increase from thirty-fold to sixty and

¹ Hebrews, xii, 11.

² St. Matthew, v, 45.

³ I Corinthians, iii, 5-7.

an hundred in the coming days. Progress arrested by some obstacle, against which fixity of purpose has seemed to press in vain, has but been as one may see a stream laden with fertilizing soil backed up by the rise of the river to which it is tributary, and thereby in quiescence overflowing its own borders, as does the Nile, until its valley is enriched thrice and fourfold by the deposits, which but for the seeming adversity would have been swept fruitlessly down and lost, — the perfect work of patience¹ symbolized. Shakespeare has told us, "Sweet are the uses of adversity;" but it is clearer still that patience thus may enrich the soul, not by perseverance merely, but by simple endurance in tarrying the Lord's leisure.²

To such gain age is heir when the strength of manhood has been given, as St. John expresses, to nourishing the word of God abiding within, and to resistance to the evil without.³ To the peculiar work of age, to the closing season of the many which have passed over the man's head, and died, are consigned two specific tasks; common to all the old, though varying in application to each man, as God shall see what each needs that he may bring his fruit to perfection. These two tasks are summed up in the words of Jesus Christ to the Apostles, after He had fed the multitudes with the few loaves and fishes;⁴

¹ St. James, i, 4.

² Psalm, xxvii, 16 (Psalter); xxxvii, 3-8.

³ 1 St. John, ii, 14.

⁴ St. Matthew, xiv, 13-21; xv, 32-38. St. Mark, vi, 32-44; viii, 1-9. St. Luke, ix, 10-17.

themselves an apt simile of the weakness of means, in which Power finds occasion to make perfect. "Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost." ¹ For it must be recognized that what remains of action to old age, as compared with the prime of life, is only fragments; but also that fragments do remain, and in fruitfulness may be more than ever, because the period is emphatically that of harvest. Moreover, fruitfulness — the increase — is not of man, but of God. To man therefore pertains only the diligence of gathering up; to God the results. So, in the miracles referred to, the increase was of Christ; the gathering of the fragments He committed to the Apostles. This has ever since remained the function of the ministry; the history of Christendom is the gathering up the fragments remaining over from the Life and Death and Resurrection of its Leader.

In the spirit of this injunction, patience makes upon age a twofold demand. The growth of infirmity, the decline of power to act, mentally or physically, must be accepted; not merely submitted to, not merely acquiesced in,² but taken to one's self by an act of the will, choosing to have that which God has appointed. But, while thus accepting, there must be care not to give over effort up to the strength that remains. Here patience will manifest itself actively in continuous, quiet, persistent endeavor. Decay is commonly gradual; much may still be done, when most no longer can.

Encouragement, too, may be found in the thought

¹ St. John, vi, 12.

² *Ante*, pp. 60-62.

so often repeated: that the crown of success is not doing, but being. I AM¹ was the Name under which God revealed Himself to the older dispensation. FATHER, SON, and HOLY SPIRIT, the Name² under which He has made Himself known to Christians, is also an expression of Being; an expansion, a growth in Revelation, but still testifying less what God does than what He is. The history of Creation — and of Redemption — is latent in the Name, is the outcome of the Being. That He is what He is, is the supreme glory of God; when He speaks of Himself as Love, He says not only I have love, or I show love, but I am Love.³ Man, created in the image of God, moves on in his proper order to a like perfection of being, to which acts indeed will not be wanting, but of which they will be not the essence — the being — but the result. Thus St. Paul says, We are created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God afore prepared that we should walk in them; but he precedes this declaration by stating the fact from which efficiency is derived. “We are God’s workmanship, created,” etc.⁴ That is, being what we are, or shall be, through God’s work in us, fitting instruments fashioned for His purposes, we shall do those things which He has prepared for us.

This purpose of God, this antecedent work, we may frustrate, as well as fulfil. Our wills He will not coerce; if we will not, He will create another instrument to take the place we refuse. Nevertheless, it remains true: Be, and you will do; for it is

¹ Exodus, iii, 13, 14.

³ 1 St. John, iv, 7-16.

² St. Matthew, xxviii, 19.

⁴ Ephesians, ii, 10.

not you who work, but the Spirit of God working in you.¹ But we shall not all do the same thing. There are differences of ministrations, and the same Lord;² the same One Workman working through many men and in many ways. This evident fact, of the numerous kinds of godly activities which characterize the spiritual as well as the natural order, St. Paul takes³ as the prelude to his famous exposition of the one spirit, of the one way, which consecrates all, — the inner frame of mind and purpose which alone begets and hallows all acceptable acts, — Love.

With youth, with life's prime, with old age, and with periods of history, it is as with individuals. Each has its appointed work; and each will fulfil its work, and can fulfil it, only as it nourishes the inner spirit of love, to God and man. Where this inner spirit is found, there need be no fear but that the external work will be found also, and will be fulfilled in proportion to the love. That the hearts of kings are in the hands of God as the rivers of water,⁴ is but a conspicuous declaration of a general truth, not confined to the eminent. It finds reiteration in the same Book: In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and

¹ St. Matthew, x, 20. St. Luke, xii, 12. I Corinthians, iii, 9; xii, 6.

² *Ibid.*, xii, 4-11.

³ I Corinthians, xii. This chapter is not to be cited merely textually, but taken with Chapter xiii as a whole, leading up through activities to the indispensable spirit within; whether by the formal design of the Apostle, or by the irresistible logic of his thought. However regarded in these respects, it remains a consummate example of the Holy Ghost working in and through man. The flow of thought is as irresistible as though the Spirit held the pen, not the man.

⁴ Proverbs, xxi, 1.

He will direct thy paths.¹ If the will be given, He will do the rest; for the will, the inner disposition, alone is beyond His power. Only the man can give that. So it is the inner spirit, variously called the heart and the will, which is decisive. Keep thy heart above all keeping, for out of it are the issues of life.²

That the heart of a man should be thus in the hand of God as a river of water, to be turned whither He will, as the rivers of Nature are turned and shaped in their course by the orderings of the ground through which they flow, is the highest fulfilment; for it is the complete surrender of the will to Him. This does not exclude effort of any kind; careful (if prayerful) thought, consideration, even cut and dried planning, the "rough hewing" of Shakespeare; but it does expect from Another a shaping of one's purposes, of the inner life, which in unconsciousness shall have somewhat in common with the growth of a plant. "Like a green olive tree in the house of God; my trust is in the tender mercy of God, for ever and ever."³ "What I am doing thou knowest not now; thou shalt know hereafter."⁴ The reconciling feature, of this unconscious providential development with perpetual conscious effort, is daily watchfulness to do at each instant what is seen to be right. The way is open, for it is Jesus Christ; His acts and His words, as applicable to the present case. This is "Watch and Pray." This is also ploughing,

¹ Proverbs, iii, 6.

³ Psalm, lii, 8.

² *Ibid.*, iv, 23.

⁴ St. John, xiii, 7.

planting, watering; but the increase is of God, not of us, and so is the guidance — the way.

Thus watching, that which may befall us in the way, whether joy, or sorrow, or pain, will not seem to us chance, nor purposeless. Love underlies each experience. "All things," says the Apostle, "are working together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to His purpose."¹ All things, however slight. Jesus Christ Himself said, The very hairs of your head are all numbered;² and if the expression be thought figurative, it cannot mean less than that the smallest incidents which touch us sensibly have their purpose. He to whom such come is being "called by them according to God's purposes." And the called are no select minority, or majority, few or many, arbitrarily chosen. Each one to whom a condition, or a circumstance, or an event, comes, is called thereby to a development, which in God's purpose is at least the individual's full redemption into the glorious liberty of the children of God;³ into conformity to the image of His Son. God's purposes do not change; but man can frustrate them in so far as they mean his personal welfare, because for that the co-operation of his personal will is needed.

As St. Paul on the one hand speaks of himself as separated from his mother's womb and called⁴ for the specific work which he performed, so on the other he declares a calling general to all: that God now

¹ Romans, viii, 28-30.

³ Romans, viii, 18-24.

² St. Matthew, x, 29, 30.

⁴ Galatians, i, 15, 16.

calleth all men everywhere to repent; ¹ that it is His will that all men should be saved; ² that He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. ³ This general call embraced St. Paul; the specific call to him also has its counterpart in each life, and can be recognized sufficiently, if there be, as in him, the will to look; to think of the man's part ⁴ in the light of his natural gifts and of the conditions which he finds in and about him.

To reconcile the realities of man's will and God's control is difficult; but less difficult than at first appears. The will is ours absolutely, irrevocably; a gift God has given and will not recall. But it is the sum of His surrender to us. He has not in like manner conceded to us the power to carry will into effect. He may indeed permit such effect, and often does; the evil will may embody itself in the evil act, to the injury of one's self or of others. But permission is not abdication; and while on the one hand His overruling may leave of the evil will nothing but the ineffectual desire, so its effects, when allowed, are still in the hands of God, to bring good out of evil. Probably, no thoughtful life will have failed to see such over-ruling,—good coming out of bad. If Joseph's eldest brother had succeeded in the purpose of delivering him out of the hands of their other brethren, ⁵ their evil will would have remained in all

¹ Acts, xvii, 30, 31.

² 1 Timothy, ii, 3, 4. Titus, ii, 11.

³ 2 Peter, iii, 9.

⁴ Romans, xii, 3-8. 1 Corinthians, xii. 1 Peter, iv, 10, 11.

⁵ Genesis, xxxvii, 18-24, 29, 30.

consequences to their inner life, their characters. He failed; the ill will took effect in act; but the issue was over-ruled for good by God.¹ Evil intent is never from Him; no evil of the will comes from Him; but He reserves control over results. These remain irresistibly within the order of His Providence, and we are therefore justified in regarding them as sent by Him, while we may not impute to Him the evil purpose in which they originated.² To the sufferer they are God's chastening, and his own opportunity.

If it be thus with the evil will, how much more with the good, where the wills of God and of man work not contrary, but together; where the river of life, to recur to the metaphor of the Psalmist,³ turns and deflects obediently to the ordering which it finds in each region through which its current flows. The wisdom of God and the power of God, by enlightening the intellect, by quickening motives, by ordering circumstances, — the valley of the river's course, — can affect the purposes of man, when they are indifferent; or change them when evil. Man thus deals with man continually, by elucidating truth, by appealing to the sense of right and wrong, by constituting conditions which operate upon motives. How much more God in His greater wisdom, His greater knowledge of the individual heart, His power over issues. Yet neither man nor God can change the

¹ Genesis, xlv, 4-8; 1, 20.

² The same line of thought applies to results from human neglects: neglect of laws of health, bad sanitation, imprudent or ungodly marriages, etc.

³ *Ante*, p. 225. Psalm, cxxvi, 4.

will if it persist in evil, when in it desire or self-interest prevails over right and truth.

As God thus makes use of us rather than we ourselves work; as work is the outcome of being; we are not to harass ourselves on the score of activities, provided our conscience bear faithful witness that we are conforming our inward spirit to the commands and example of Christ. So far as known to us, Christ's activities for thirty years were confined to the home and the handicraft. Even Him God had in training for the appointed time. The greatest of the anti-types of Christ, Moses, so far as known to us, until he was forty led the life of an eminent subject in the court of a king. For forty years more he was a nomad shepherd.¹ In the one occupation as in the other he was in training. The processes we do not know; the results we do. The conditions antecedent and subsequent warrant the inference that the inner man was the sphere of development; to which his personal will coöperated faithfully, by simple heedfulness and obedience to present duty in either position to which the orderings of God had called him.

The incident which led to his flight, the prompt slaying of an Egyptian oppressor, possibly also the manner of his interference between two of his own race, which was resented,² indicate a peremptoriness of temper, a hastiness of act, unsuited to the difficult rôle to which he was destined, to be the leader of a headstrong, petulant people from bondage to national life. His native impetuosity broke out once in the wanderings, and was chastised instantly by ex-

¹ Acts, vii, 23, 30.

² Exodus, ii, 11-15.

clusion from entrance into the promised land.¹ The sternness of the warning may indicate his need of constant self-control; but, in general, the result of his forty years of frustration and of postponement was a character concerning which we are told that he was very meek, patient and unresentful, above all men. When thus fitted inwardly for his task, the call to great action came. We are apt to overlook that before his flight he had undertaken to do just that which he ultimately did;² but his act was premature, he himself yet unripe, and probably the conditions also. He must stand and wait for forty years; but he was serving then as truly as when he faced Pharaoh, or led the people out. Character was maturing until he had become fully God's workmanship; not only created from the first unto good works, but further fashioned into an instrument "meet for the Master's use."³

This is the expression used by St. Paul to his disciple Timothy with reference to his fitness for the office to which he had been called, that of a bishop, a chief administrator. But while the Apostle's charge deals with questions of administration,⁴ the weight of his monitions rests upon personal fitness, the cultivation of the inner spirit, studying thereby to present himself approved unto God, a workman that needed not to be ashamed, holding a straight course in the word of truth.⁵ Conduct is to spring from inner dis-

¹ Numbers, xx, 10-13, 24; xxvii, 12-14. Deuteronomy, iii, 23-26. ² Acts, vii, 22-29. ³ 2 Timothy, ii, 21.

⁴ 1 Timothy, ii, iii, iv, v. 2 Timothy, iv, 1-5.

⁵ *Ibid.*, ii, 15.

positions; the evil to be shunned and the good to be cultivated are alike within.¹ St. Paul intimates much the same concerning himself and his own course. God has separated him to his appointed work from his mother's womb, and called him by His grace² to labors, activities, which exceeded those of all the other apostles;³ but when the revelation came, the call to go to the Gentiles, after an immediate brief period of fervent preaching on the scene of his conversion,⁴ — apparently to Jews only, — he sought solitude.²

The magnitude of the summons might well overwhelm him. Even the Twelve had not risen yet to the conception of a world-wide conversion of the Gentiles,⁵ which was now imparted to one who up to this moment had been a Pharisee of the Pharisees.⁶ A boundless mission opened before his eyes; and, like Moses, he had on the human side natural gifts and special training to fit him for it. But, unlike Moses at the first, he waited to test the spirit within him.⁷ On the one hand he conferred not with flesh and blood, who might have dissuaded him; on the other he trusted not the first impulse immediately. He went away to Arabia, the scene also of Moses' discipline, — as of Elijah's, — and there, alone with

¹ 1 Timothy, i, 3-6, 18-20; iv, 6-16; v, 22; vi, 11-16. 2 Timothy, i, 3-10, 14; ii, 1-3, 7, 8, 11-13, 22-26; iii, 14-17.

² Galatians, i, 15-17.

³ 1 Corinthians, xv, 9-11. 2 Corinthians, xi, 21-32.

⁴ Acts, ix, 19-25.

⁵ *Ibid.*, x, 13-16, 28, 29; xi, 2; xv, 6-11.

⁶ *Ibid.*, xxii, 3-6; xxiii, 6; xxvi, 4, 5. Philippians, iii, 5, 6.

⁷ 1 St. John, iv, 1.

God, subjected himself to the teaching and the preparation, to the ascertainment of God's purpose which awaits all those who so seek. The duration of this withdrawal is uncertain; but that it was one of external inactivity seems certain, for we hear nothing of fruits of ministry in Arabia.¹

It may be remarked that this retirement from active life, voluntary on the first occasion, was afterwards imposed by God in the midst of the Apostle's missionary career. Two years of enforced seclusion in Cæsarea,² followed by two of restraint in Rome,³ gave long time for thought. They were not unprofitable years, even in outward action; but they involved complete suspension of activities in the common meaning of the word, and afforded abundant opportunity to search and cultivate the inner spirit, to make himself more and more meet for use by the Master. It was fit that it should be so. The disciple is not above his Master;⁴ and the Master, for His own training, before He began even to preach personally, had retired voluntarily into the wilderness, in solitude.⁵ So also in the first expansion of His personal mission, the selection of the Twelve,⁶ to go out from Him as from a centre, analogous to the call to the Gentiles proceeding from Jerusalem,⁷ He passed the night before in the mountain, alone, in prayer.

¹ See note at end of this chapter.

² Acts, xxiv, 23-27. ³ *Ibid.*, xxviii, 30, 31.

⁴ St. Matthew, x, 24. St. Luke, vi, 40. St. John, xiii, 16; xv, 20.

⁵ St. Matthew, iii, 13-iv, 17.

⁶ St. Luke, vi, 12-15; ix, 1-6, 10.

⁷ *Ibid.*, xxiv, 46-49. Acts, i, 4-8.

The particular incidents are simply striking illustrations of the habitual tenor of the life of Christ; the stream of thought and communion which throughout His recorded career, brimful of activities as this was, came continually to the surface, betraying the perpetual current beneath. The testimony to the inner life is summed up in the words: He who sent Me hath not left Me alone, for I do always those things that please Him. Ye shall leave Me alone; and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me.¹ The inward communion is inseparably linked with the outward action; and so in the moment of final mortal weakness, at the instant of death, the outward word, the only action then possible to Him who was crucified through weakness, reflects the same inward state: It is finished. Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit.²

It is sufficient to the disciple to be as his Master. With them, too, it is within that the copious harvest — God's workmanship — will be realized. In the weakness of age, in the failure of power for external action, the energies concentrated within would naturally be more productive of progressive being. The gathering of the fragments was the closing act of Christ's miracle; by that it was finished; and it is to be noted that the fragments from the few loaves and fishes, filling twelve and seven baskets in the several instances, much exceeded the original provision from which they were left. From the ancient Scriptures we have the like strong expression of the

¹ St. John, viii, 28, 29; xvi, 32.

² *Ibid.*, xix, 30. St. Luke, xxiii, 46.

relative value of the fragment. A thousand years in Thy sight are but as yesterday¹ — as one day. What contrast between much and little more emphatic, or more illustrative, than of one day with ten centuries?

We may safely apply these parallels to old age, expecting that to the conclusion of this earthly period of the unending Life, should be realized in the highest degree the assurance, We are God's workmanship. From more advanced being may be expected more abundant and better fruit. This is natural, too, for increasing infirmities give increasing occasion, opportunity, for submissive acceptance, thus favoring growth in grace, which is not of ourselves, but the gift of God,² the perfected work of patience;³ and also there is more leisure — enforced — for quiet thought, thought passive and receptive, that highest thought in which rather God speaks than man reflects, — the thought of Inspiration.

So the old may say truly, The lot has fallen unto me in a good ground; yea, I have a goodly heritage.⁴ The whole tenor of this psalm (xvi) is that of a consecrated past reaping the harvest of life's ending. "Jehovah, Thou art my God, I have no good beyond Thee. Thou art the portion of my inheritance, and of my cup. I have set Thee always before me." Applicable primarily to Christ, it tells the experience of one who was His follower beforehand; who, like Abraham, rejoiced to see His day, who saw it and was

¹ Psalm, xc, 4; quoted in 2 St. Peter, iii, 8.

² Ephesians, ii, 8, 9. Galatians, ii, 15, 16, 21. Acts, xv, 11.

³ St. James, i, 4. St. Luke, xxi, 19.

⁴ Psalm, xvi, 6.

glad.¹ From that gladness sprang the unconscious prophecy of Christ's Resurrection, quoted by both St. Peter and St. Paul,² Thou wilt not leave my soul in Hades, neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption; a conspicuous outcome of that privilege of age, which in quiescence hears the voice of God. "I bless Jehovah, who hath given me counsel; yea, my heart instructeth me in the night seasons."

"Grow old along with me !

The best is yet to be,

The last of life, for which the first was made ;

Our times are in His hand

Who saith, 'A whole I plann'd,

Youth shows but half; trust God, see all, nor be afraid.' "

Grow old along with Me phrases what the Psalmist heard from Jehovah; his God and ours. Spend the present with an eye wise to the future. All life capable of self-consciousness, therefore all human life, looks forward; to what often hopeless, impossible, unsatisfying ends, experience testifies. Life is filled with wreckage, because of misdirection of desires. We spend our money for that which is not bread, and our labor for that which satisfieth not.³ "Getting and spending," says Wordsworth, "we lay waste our powers"; the true enjoyments of the mere natural life even are rejected. "We have given our hearts away, — a sordid boon!" And why? Be-

¹ St. John, viii, 56-58.

² Acts, ii, 25-31; xiii, 34-37. 1 St. Peter, i, 10-12. St. Matthew, xiii, 16, 17. St. Luke, x, 23, 24.

³ Isaiah, lv, 2.

cause "the world is too much with us, late and soon." The world, which should be God's, which God in Christ loved and sought, but which in spirit is the opposite of God, the opponent of God.¹

The world, as it now is, is summed up exhaustively by the Apostle in three expressions: the lust of the flesh, the disordered desires for bodily indulgence; the lust of the eyes, inordinate devotion to, and satisfaction in, the exercise of the perceptive faculties, concealed or dissembled under the exalted name of Reason; the pride of life, the peculiar temptation of Strength, whether physical, mental, or moral, to trust in itself rather than in God — self-reliance exaggerated beyond measure, and displayed in vainglory.² Along with one or more of these many grow old. These, not God, are the companions of the journey.

If it is well to be diligent to gather up fragments, it is not likewise well to postpone diligence till there is nought but fragments to collect. The flush of life may lawfully rejoice in its strength, — strength of body, strength of intellect, strength of purpose, strength of money or of other means; but if joy is in these alone, as possessions, this is the pride of life, countless in its manifestations: luxury, display, arrogance, indifference to religion, and such like. Spent upon the gratification of the senses, powers serve the lust of the flesh; spent upon intellectual engrossment, the lust of the eye. From all this there is redemption in the consecrated motive: Grow old

¹ St. John, vii, 7; xv, 18, 19. St. James, iv, 4. I St. John, ii, 15-17; iii, 1, 13; iv, 5, 6.

² I St. John, ii, 16.

along with Me. Else we grow old along with the world. Such is the choice held out to youth in the light of Christ's Life and example.

The choice made is itself the judgment, of which the Scripture speaks. "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the desire of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment."¹ Judgment, not to condemn because of possessions or of joy, but to ascertain to what ends they have been used. To all such abundances applies the caution of Jesus Christ concerning wealth: How hardly shall they who have riches enter into the Kingdom of God,² — subject themselves to God. So long as possessions or qualities are thought one's own, and are so used, they are riches, and bring their specific danger of trust in them, which is a form of the pride of life. Only when recognized as God's, in trust to the man, does he become poor, and able to enter the Kingdom as subject. And the man utters his own sentence by his choice; even as Jesus Christ said, The condemnation is this: that the Light is come into the world and men loved darkness rather than light.³ By a bitter irony we pronounce our own judgment and age registers the sentence.

Full-fill is an intensive word, which seeks and finds emphasis by repetition. Fulfilment of life demands not only all the energy but all the time that man has,

¹ Ecclesiastes, xi, 9.

² St. Matthew, xiii, 22; xix, 23. St. Mark, x, 23-25. St. Luke, xviii, 24, 25. 1 Timothy, vi, 9, 10.

³ St. John, iii, 19-21.

to foster the work which God purposes to accomplish in him. It is found in observing the spirit and example of the Master, who went about His daily work simply, improving each occasion as it arose to Him. In the general excellence of His example, in an inner spirit which is for universal imitation, we overlook the fact that Jesus Christ, like every man, had His individual mission and ministry. The universality of the fruit, of the results, is the consequence of fidelity to the particular charge appointed Him.

It was the purpose of God, through Christ as Man, to redeem all mankind; but the seed of this vast enterprise, bearing in its womb the fulfilment of history, was the Personal life of Christ, manifested to us in conduct. Only by antecedent fulfilment within this limited range could the universal fulfilment be accomplished. His appointed work was threefold:¹ the preaching of the Gospel, the new message; teaching — elucidating the meaning of the Jewish Scriptures, the older message; in these fulfilling His own ideal of the scribe instructed unto the Kingdom of heaven, who brings out of his treasures things new and old;² and healing, in virtue of the miraculous powers entrusted to Him. As St. Peter summed it up, He was anointed with the Holy Spirit and with Power, and went about doing good.³ But with this distinct general purpose as His guide for a general line of action, He is always ready for occasions. In them He sees not interruption, but opportunity. With the work of redemption consciously laid

¹ St. Matthew, iv, 23; ix, 35. St. Luke, iv, 14-44.

² St. Matthew, xiii, 52.

³ Acts, x, 38.

upon Him, or, rather, assumed by Him in obedience to the Father's will, He is never in haste, never presses on regardless of the incidents which God's providence brings before Him.

He "came to seek and to save that which was lost."¹ These His words are applied to one who was not in bodily distress, but in spiritual danger. Such He sought; but of those in bodily distress it is not said usually that He sought, but that they came, or were brought, to Him. This is the difference between the plan, or purpose of life, and its occasions. On His way to raise the dead, He stops to commend and encourage the faith of the one person in a throng who had touched Him spiritually and been healed.² Sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel,³ He yet, on occasion, extends sympathy and benefit to a Gentile woman, who crosses His path with a manifestation of spiritual insight rare in the chosen people;⁴ an insight which shows her one of the true seed of believing Abraham.⁵ So also He recognizes and declares the faith of the Gentile centurion, granting his request.⁶ Let His story be read in this light, and it will be seen that the formulated purpose which should underlie the conduct of every life was by Him consistently held subject to the superior necessity of

¹ St. Luke, xix, 9, 10. St. Matthew, ix, 13. St. Mark, ii, 16, 17.

² St. Matthew, ix, 18-26. St. Mark, v, 22-34. St. Luke, viii, 41-48.

³ St. Matthew, x, 5, 6; xv, 24. Romans, xv, 8, 9.

⁴ St. Matthew, xv, 21-28. St. Mark, vii, 24-30.

⁵ Galatians, iii, 7, 8, 9.

⁶ St. Matthew, viii, 5-13.

accepting the ordering of God, by fulfilling the particular opportunity, however it might seem momentarily to arrest His progress. The supreme instance is the Crucifixion, which He accepted, although it apparently destroyed His work with His Life.

The example is a message to each man; His Life is the light of men.¹ A general purpose and course of life we must have; a framework, on which action and activity may climb upward. That is our part; but along with this there must be the perpetual watching for indications, for the opportunities, which are God's part. Grow old along with Me; but how shall this be done? Christ Himself gives to all the answer that He gave to Thomas. Lord, we know not whither Thou goest, and how shall we know the way? Jesus answered, I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no one cometh unto the Father but through Me.² It is not necessary to know whither, in order to know the way. The end, indeed, "the Father," the whither, is told; but no more. Beyond this, none of us know whither we are being led; what the nature of the way in itself, what its occasions, what its end here. We walk by faith, not by sight. Even for the hereafter we know no more than it is "to be with Christ," in seeing Whom we have seen "The Father."³ Christ the beginning, Christ the end, Christ the way between; Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last.⁴

¹ St. John, i, 4; viii, 12; ix, 5; xii, 35, 36.

² *Ibid.*, xiv, 4, 5, 6.

³ *Ibid.*, xiv, 9-11.

⁴ Revelation, i, 8; xxi, 6; xxii, 13. Isaiah, xli, 4; xliii, 10; xliv, 6.

We shall know the way by seeing it in Himself; in His Life, the Life of God; in His teachings the words of God; in His conduct the character of God, manifested to us in terms of human flesh, of man's nature; the only terms which we can understand, or could have understood, being men. This definition being apprehended, the way, though unknown, is known. It is conformity to Christ's conduct and teachings; and this implies perpetual intercourse by the appointed means: in the Word of God, in Sacraments and Prayer, in Thanksgiving and Praise. This sums up the command: Follow Me; for it sustains in man the Life of Christ. Grow old with Me. From birth, it has been said, we begin to die. From the dawn of consciousness, of responsibility, we may thus grow old.

St. Peter, one of the most human of men, affords a very complete illustration. He had once, for a passing moment, apprehended the fullness of the mystery before him: Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God.¹ His heeding the call, Follow Me,² was among the opening incidents of Christ's Ministry. He went along, for a time, in perplexity, despite that sublime confession; but still along. At the crucial moment, when all the disciples forsook the Master and fled,³ St. Peter still followed, though afar off,⁴ and went into the palace of the high-priest, "to see the end." We know what came of that

¹ St. Matthew, xvi, 15, 16.

² *Ibid.*, iv, 18-20; viii, 22; xvi, 24. St. John, i, 35-42; xxi, 19-22.

³ St. Matthew, xxvi, 56. St. Mark, xiv, 50.

⁴ St. Luke, xxii, 54. St. John, xviii, 15, 16.

timid, yet fond, following; but we also know the end of St. Peter. He received anew the command, Follow Me, with its accompanying prophecy of suffering and death. Thenceforth, though with recurrent manifestation of weakness,¹ he grew old with Christ. How his weakness was made strong is told in the first twelve chapters of the Book of the Acts.

To those who have realized that the testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of prophecy,² the underlying thought of the Way, as embraced in His Person, comes out strongly in an expression of the prophet Isaiah; as it is also to be found in the Book of the Proverbs: The path of the Just One is as the shining light which shineth more and more unto the perfect day.³ The value of light is twofold: not only that it reveals objects, but that it is itself an object to be seen in darkness, a beacon by which to guide movement. Thus Isaiah spoke: When the enemy cometh in like a flood, the Spirit of Jehovah will lift up a standard against him.⁴ These words, stirring though they are, breathing the very ardor of noble strife, are not to be regarded simply as a splendid metaphor, of a champion stemming the adverse tide of doubtful fight, — like Nelson at St. Vincent, — conveying assurance of Divine help in extremity. This, indeed, doubtless; but to what serves a standard? It is a beacon, a rallying point, a visible symbol of the essence of duty, guiding like a light in the darkness,

¹ Acts, x, 13, 14. Galatians, ii, 11-21.

² Revelation, xix, 10.

³ Proverbs, iv, 18.

⁴ Isaiah, lix, 19.

summoning to its side every energy, to follow, to support, to save. Thus it imparts direction to movement, — a way, — commanding attainment, forbidding abandonment.

So, in the spiritual combat, of Church or man, when overborne by the weight of temptation, or trial, or discouragements, when impulse slackens or swerves through the discord of motives; when standards of right and wrong are beaten down or obscured by the surgings of passion or self-interest; when, in a word, there impends the worst of disasters that can befall a warring host, — being put to confusion, — the Spirit of Jehovah lifts up the standard, Christ; His Life, His Example, His Words. Where stands He in this tumult? The standard, like the Way, is a Person. I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me.¹ It recalls those fine lines:

“If my standard bearer fall, as fall full well he may,

Press where ye see my white plume shine, amid the
ranks of war.”

“Lord, in Thee have I trusted, let me never be confounded.” But it must be remembered that such devotion to a standard presupposes a long acceptance and association, the high development of duty and honor and love which the colors represent to the soldier. Such devotion is not born in a day. It is the consecrated habit of a lifetime, with all the sway,

¹ St. John, xii, 32; iii, 14; viii, 28. Isaiah, xlix, 22.

instinctive, half-unconscious, that is exerted by habits, good or bad.

The thought of the Way is one that admits and requires a large elaboration — working out — in details and in application; but it may be questioned whether one man can do this well for another. Suggestions doubtless are useful and can be made; and it is suggestion chiefly, rather than a formal plan of life, that religious reading, even of the Bible, gives to each. The most elaborate system of “direction” can scarcely effect more than outlines, with the attendant evil of sapping individual power to comprehend personal life, and to order personal conduct. For the rest, if pursued in this spirit, of purpose saturated with the knowledge of Christ as revealed to us in the New Testament, life itself gives its teaching; from moment to moment shows the way in the light of the Way; for life is the ordering of God. “Though the Lord give thee the bread of adversity and the water of affliction, yet shall not thy teachers be hidden any more, but thine eyes shall see thy teachers; and thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the Way, walk ye in it; when ye turn to the right hand and when ye turn to the left.”¹ To the attentive, life is a continuing revelation; of it we may say with Cowper,

“Unbelief
Will scan His work in vain.
God is His own interpreter,
And He will make it plain;”

¹ Isaiah, xxx, 20, 21. Compare also, xxxv, 5, 8, 9; xlii, 16; l, 10. Proverbs, iv, 18.

or with Newman,

“I do not ask to see
The distant scene; one step enough for me.”

NOTE.—In the Book of the Acts, there are three accounts of the conversion of St. Paul. They agree in substance; but in some details differ slightly, and significantly. Chapter ix is a current narrative by the author of the book; the two others, chapters xxii and xxvi, are given as addresses by St. Paul himself. The first records merely the incidents of the conversion, with some subsequent particulars, which apparently are given in order of time, although without specification of intervals.

Of the two addresses, the first is to a Jewish audience, the second to one characteristically Gentile; conditions which in each case dictate the manner in which the orator handles his materials, in order to gain attention and to convince. To use his own words, he makes himself all things to all men, that he may by all means save some. (1 Corinthians, ix, 19–22.) Speaking to Jews, assembled in an excited mob, ready to burst into an outcry that would drown his voice, he precludes his statements with an appeal to sentiments which he and they had in common; and then develops his story in the particulars which account for his acceptance of Jesus as the Messiah of the Jews. This alone was inevitably offensive to his hearers; but much less so than the idea of the Messiah being for the Gentiles as well as for themselves. This, therefore, he postpones to the last, and consequently does not mention the intimation of a message to the Gentiles, conveyed to him at the period of his conversion, but only the commission to that effect given him in Jerusalem, some time subsequently. His caution is justified; for although, like a practised pleader, he had gained time for passion to subside and conciliation to work, the mere mention of the words of Christ, “I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles,” creates an uproar which then and there ends his speech.

Some two years later he speaks to Gentiles. Under these differing circumstances he introduces unhesitatingly the words, “I send thee to the Gentiles,” on the first occasion of their utterance; that is, when Christ appeared to him on the road to Damascus. The

exclusive spirit of the Jews was known to his audience; he himself was a Jew; his object to conciliate, to persuade his Gentile hearers. The mission to the Gentiles is accordingly introduced at the first opportunity offered by the narrative, and is thenceforth emphasized by repetition.

In themselves, the fact of two commands, on the way to Damascus and at Jerusalem, stands no more in need of explanation than does a similar repetition in secular matters, in an important charge to an agent. Besides, they harmonize perfectly with the course natural to a reflective man, when receiving an idea not only new to him, but revolutionary. Action is delayed for reflection, for the test of the future; worked out in thought, in circumstances, and in experience. Without inquiring curiously into the nature of Christ's manifestation to St. Paul, it can be believed that an occurrence and words adequate to instant conviction that Jesus is the Christ might not as immediately bear the certainty that he had understood aright as to the mission to the Gentiles. This traversed his entire past; Christ Himself had been sent only to the Jews; what sure warrant that his follower should go to the Gentiles? In this connection it must be remembered that St. Paul himself intimates in both addresses that, although commissioned to the Gentiles, he first and for some time preached to the Jews. (Chap. xxii, 18-21; xxvi, 20.) With this the account in Chapter ix (20-22), agrees; and throughout his ministry he first argues in the synagogues. (Chap. xiii, 5, 14, 15; xiv, 1; xvii, 1, 10; xviii, 4, 19; xix, 8.) A doubt of this kind, or hesitancy due to some other cause, appears to be implied in the statement to the Galatians (Chap. i, 15-18), that he conferred with no one, but did withdraw into Arabia — by himself. This is the reasonable course for a man satisfied that God is dealing immediately with him, but yet recognizing the possibility of self-deception. He takes time; as St. John recommends (1 St. John, iv, 1), he proves the spirit, whether it is of God; but he will have no intermediary. The fate of the prophet sent to Jeroboam (1 Kings, xiii) would be present to one who knew the Scriptures, as did St. Paul.

From the statements to the Galatians, it would appear that between the first and second commissions, at Damascus and at Jerusalem, three years intervened. Yet the same reverent caution,

especially notable in one of his impetuous spirit, appears after many years in his going to Jerusalem to confer with the other Apostles concerning the substance of his preaching, — “the gospel which I preach.” (Galatians, ii, 1, 2.) This jealousy of self-deception, at two particular crises, manifested in two courses of conduct outwardly contradictory, indicates the scrutiny to which the Apostles subjected that which they called revelation. To the believer it is confirmatory of their soberness and of their mission.

CHAPTER V

HOPE

THE revelations of life are progressive, and to the Christian believer come charged with hope. We owe to St. Paul the precise formulation of Hope as a Christian grace and duty, as something more than a happy condition of mind, largely constitutional, — optimistic, as we say. Faith, Hope, Love. If Love be the greatest,¹ possibly we may infer an ascending order, placing Hope above even Faith. Faith the foundation, Love the crown; Hope perhaps the rising of the building, or the cheer of the way. At all events, it is noticeable that St. Paul insistently commands rejoicing, and associates Hope with experience of life. There is, too, his other series: Tribulations work patience; and patience, experience; and experience, Hope.² For “patience,” the Revised Version reads “steadfastness;” and for “experience,” “approvedness;” but steadfastness is but patience without the additional implication of suffering, and approvedness applies to the proof furnished by life (which is experience), as well as to proof made of the individual. Tribulation works to Hope; how much more do the blessings which we too often fail to note, or to find cause for rejoicing. Again, he writes to the Thessalonians, We remember,

¹ I Corinthians, xiii, 13.

² Romans, v, 3-5.

brethren, your patience of hope in Jesus Christ.¹ And again, Hope that is seen is not hope, for who hopeth for that which he seeth; but if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.²

The patience which must characterize gradual progress is therefore associated closely to Hope, in the apprehension of the man who in the ranks of Christian teachers stands next to Christ Himself. St. Paul had long and varied experience of life, of its ups and downs, its sufferings and happiness. He knew thus the extremes of fortune and of position,³ and from them had learned in whatever state he was therewith to be content;⁴ content with things present.⁵ Specifically, he had undergone the great disappointment common to all the Apostles, that the coming of the Kingdom of Christ was deferred to a time unknown; that its fulfilment was not to be in their day. John the Baptist had felt this, and in a moment of apparent impatience sent to ask of Christ whether He really was the One who should come.⁶ The Twelve during the time of His ministry expected that the Kingdom of God would appear immediately;⁷ and after the Resurrection asked the question.⁸ The reply of Christ was for all time and for all stages of life: It is not for you to know the times and seasons; but ye shall receive Power. This

¹ 1 Thessalonians, i, 3.

² Romans, viii, 24, 25.

³ Philippians, iv, 12.

⁴ *Ibid.*, iv, 11.

⁵ Hebrews, xiii, 5.

⁶ St. Matthew, xi, 2-6. St. Luke, vii, 18-23.

⁷ St. Luke, xix, 11.

⁸ Acts, i, 6, 7, 8.

left the future undetermined, and concentrated attention upon the present, the now, as the field for man's energies. For that it promised Power. The strong prepossession of their minds was thus left to be corrected gradually by experience. The times and the seasons are to man relatively unimportant; for him always there is but one season — now, and its opportunities. As his now, so his strength; but for that which he sees not he is to hope, and the power which Hope brings will be given him.

Like all God's orderings, the delay was educative to those who were exercised thereby. In this school St. Paul learned Hope. The Kingdom seen would cease to be an object of hope; not seen, deferred, he learned with patience to wait for it — but always in hope. God is to him the God of Hope, who fills with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in Hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.¹ Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that through patience and through comfort of the Scriptures, we might have Hope.² Christians are to know the Hope of God's calling.³ They are called in one Hope.⁴ Hope is laid up for them, the Hope of the Gospel; Christ in you the Hope of glory.⁵ So St. Peter says, Christians are begotten again to a living Hope.⁶ He charges them to be sober and to set their Hope perfectly upon the grace to be brought them at the

¹ Romans, xv, 13.

³ Ephesians, i, 18.

⁵ Colossians, i, 5, 23, 27.

² *Ibid.*, 4.

⁴ *Ibid.*, iv, 4.

⁶ 1 St. Peter, i, 3.

revelation of Jesus Christ,¹ to be ready always to give a reason for the Hope that is in them.² This frame of mind, once attained, was its own reward, its own fulfilment, and brought its own manifestations in words and acts. The temper of spiritual Hope, of godly expectation, if perfect, would exceed even possession.

“ ’T is not the grapes of Canaan that repay,
But the high faith that failed not by the way.”³

The inward spirit is better than the outward gain. If the possession of the kingdom meant stoppage, stagnation of development, it would be an inferior condition; but eternity, offering endless progress, sustains endlessly Hope. Hope abideth.⁴

The Cross, the accepted symbol of Christ's love, is equally the symbol of His Hope. In it He saw fulfilled the desire of His soul and was satisfied.⁵ “I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me. This He said, signifying by what manner of death He should die.”⁶ To draw all men unto Him was the hope of His Life, as it was His mission. He breathed out the life of His humiliation with words of Hope: It is finished. Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit.⁷ In the accomplishment of His sacrifice He saw Redemption com-

¹ St. Peter, i, 13.

² *Ibid.*, iii, 15.

³ James Russell Lowell, Commemoration Ode.

⁴ I Corinthians, xiii, 13.

⁵ Isaiah, liii, 11.

⁶ St. John, xii, 31-33.

⁷ *Ibid.*, xix, 30. St. Luke, xxiii, 46.

pleted, to the last in time who shall be redeemed.¹ Peace, joy, assurance, patience inexhaustible, were constantly with Him; and these are the qualities of Hope. Hope He had in the depths of which He said, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.² Only those who confound ease with peace will find a paradox here; or in the parallel expression, "Peace I leave with you; My Peace I give unto you,"³ contrasted with the words, "Now is My soul troubled."⁴ Trouble with Him was like the troubling of the purest water, which though agitated throws up no evil, no polluting substance, such as is despair, — loss of Hope. It is the wicked who are like the troubled sea, which casts up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.⁵

Hope, as a frame of mind and feeling, is to be classed among the emotions. On the other hand, its being associated by St. Paul with faith and love places it among the duties of the Christian; for both faith and love are the subject of distinct emphatic commands by Jesus Christ, reiterated by the Apostles. We are charged, in short, to cherish emotion as a valuable factor in Christian life. St. Paul's exhortation, Desire earnestly the best gifts,⁶ — itself a command to emotion, to desire, — precedes immediately his eulogy of Love, with which he couples Faith and Hope.

¹ Isaiah, xlix, 5-12, 22, 23. See note, end of chapter.

² St. Matthew, xxvi, 38. St. Mark, xiv, 34.

³ St. John, xiv, 27.

⁴ *Ibid.*, xii, 27.

⁵ Isaiah, lvii, 19-21.

⁶ I Corinthians, xii, 31.

There is a disposition to undervalue emotions, because of their frequent transiency and lack of sequence. In so far, reproach is just; and this tendency will be particularly strong among practical peoples, whose eyes are fixed upon results, upon things accomplished. To regard emotion solely thus, however, is to depreciate power; for emotion is power. But like all power it needs to be managed, economized, guided, and disciplined. It must not be allowed to run to waste, or to be misdirected. Emotions must be brought to book, made to give an account of themselves, as shown in their fruit. They need also — and this is often overlooked — to be acquired. “The end of the commandment is love,” and love is assuredly an emotion; the greatest in the real meaning of the word, which is, to move a person out of himself, or of his accustomed course. The “commandment,” in the expression quoted, is to a course of action, the purpose, or end, of which is the emotion of love.

Emotions which end in themselves and not in action are vain, or worse. They enter into the category of opportunities unimproved. Such is the case of those of whom Christ said that when they hear the word they receive it straightway with joy; but not having root in themselves fall away under trouble or persecution.¹ They experienced emotion, joy; but it was superficial, ended in itself, did not strike root downward, but like escaping steam blew away upward. Emotion reproduces in this the relation of theory to

¹ St. Matthew, xiii, 5, 6, 20, 21.

practice. Theory, however acute or elaborate, exists strictly only in the mind; not till it is carried into action does it become effectual. Emotions have the same office to practice, although they do not represent the same processes as theory does. Theory is sight, Emotion is power; the one directive, the other forceful. To disparage either in comparison with practice, or with so-called practical results, is to decry means in relation to ends.

A Christian life is not fulfilled which has knowingly omitted acquiring, to the extent of its faculties, the understanding of the ways of the Life, which corresponds to theory, or the consecrated power which emotion ministers. Such mental and moral acquirements enter into the person's being, of which the conduct of life is the outward expression. To aim at practical results without understanding of the fittest means to be employed is, to say the best, the offering of a service which cannot but be maimed. It was said of the Law, that although it was holy and just and good, it was defective in power.¹ So there are means which in practice are weak and unprofitable to the ends in view; it is by the bringing in of a better Hope, a clearer view, and greater force, that we draw nigh to God effectually.²

Emotion harnessed and guided is steam controlled in a boiler, with pipes connecting to the engine which it is to drive. The steam is no less a force if it be allowed to escape; it simply becomes a force wasted, unimproved. To use another simile — our Lord's

¹ Romans, vii, 12, 18-25.

² Hebrews, vii, 18, 19.

own ¹ — emotions are talents, for which we must render an account. Fear and love are emotions; the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom, the love of God the end; but fear and love may end in feeling only, in which case there is neither wisdom nor profit.

Listen to Emotion, acquired, disciplined, directed, speaking in one of its most celebrated utterances. What things were gain to me, these have I counted loss for Christ. Yea, verily, and I count all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord. For Him I suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may gain Christ; that I may know Him, and the power of His Resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, becoming conformed to His death. I press on, if so be that I may lay hold on that for which I was laid hold on by Jesus Christ. I count not myself yet to have laid hold; but one thing I do, forgetting the things which are behind and stretching forward to the things which are before, I press on.²

To use an expression of the speaker's own elsewhere, these are "words of truth and soberness,"³ consistent with pure rational decision, consonant with facts, and eminently productive in results; but they will scarcely be called unemotional. They represent a momentary culmination of a frame of substantial feeling, roused to utterance at the time by the particular circumstances of his writing. They are words of Hope, unrelaxing in energy, dynamic; as it is steadfast also in grip, — static, — the anchor

¹ St. Matthew, xxv, 14-30.

² Philippians, iii, 7-14.

³ Acts, xxvi, 25.

of the soul, sure and steadfast.¹ To apply to this instance words used concerning the writer on another occasion, "His spirit was moved within him,"² — when he saw Athens full of idols; an emotion which, being by him improved, brought souls to Christ. In the opening of his Christian course, St. Paul had experience of emotions; of hatred,³ vivid then as the devotion just quoted, overcome by the emotion of awe,⁴ succeeded by that of love. The good had cast out the bad, as perfect love casts out fear, and then had been cherished and nourished by reflection and action. The nutriment of emotion appears in the words, That I may know Him, and the power of His Resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being thereto conformed. In other words, St. Paul had submitted himself to, had diligently cultivated, the impressions which meditation upon Christ Himself, His excellence, His sufferings, His Resurrection, were calculated to produce and to sustain. So produced and so sustained, they constituted an emotion that found expression, not only in the glowing words of the passages quoted, but in a life, the self-devotion of which needs not to be told here.⁵

To his understanding, the first in order of the fruits of the Spirit are emotions: Love, Joy, Peace;⁶ not improbably the exact succession of his experiences after his conversion. To him, the Peace of God passeth understanding;⁷ the power of its grasp

¹ Hebrews, vi, 18-20.

² Acts, xvii, 16.

³ *Ibid.*, ix, 1; xxvi, 9-11.

⁴ *Ibid.*, ix, 4-9; xxii, 7-11.

⁵ 1 Corinthians, xv, 10. 2 Corinthians, xi, 21-31.

⁶ Galatians, v, 22.

⁷ Philippians, iv, 7.

therefore is not intellectual, though accordant with reason. It is a mode of feeling, moral, and spiritually sustained. Upon the three emotions follow actions — that is, conduct — corresponding; long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control.¹ To his Ephesian disciples he commends spiritual emotion, and its becoming indulgence, in strong phrase.² Be not drunk with wine, but be filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord. The antithesis between wine and the Spirit is daring; but it is not that of opposition merely, but of similar effects from opposite causes, manifesting themselves in analogous actions. The rejoicing of faith and hope and love may affect the spirits as does the refreshment of wine.

Refreshment, indeed, being the restoration of strength and courage, to the weary or depressed, is a just aim of spiritual emotion. The renewal of force is not less necessary than its first creation.³ That which innocently ministers to such an end is good. Music in its place, as meditation in its, ministers to that drawing near to God in the affections, which is true spiritual emotion. The influence of numbers, inspired by a common purpose, takes shape in power, which may be operative to signal result. When the brethren came to meet St. Paul on his way to captivity, he thanked God and took courage.⁴

¹ Galatians, v, 22.

² Ephesians, v, 18, 19.

³ Isaiah, xl, 29-31.

⁴ Acts, xxviii, 14, 15.

The effect of such circumstances upon the individual is notorious; that it often passes with the occasion, is inoperative, does not condemn the condition or the means, but the man himself. He has simply thrown away opportunity. Church attendance ministers to such ends. They are alike guilty who by absence fail to supply the numbers, or who, being present, fail in due preparation of mind and heart, in reflective appreciation of the conditions, and so more or less miss the uplift, the emotion, the inspiration, through which the grace of God can work more powerfully to its ends. In short, Emotion as a working power can be acquired; it is largely dependent upon the will.

Consequently and fairly, Love and Joy, emotions, are recognized and commanded frequently by the Apostles, who herein are consistent with the Old Testament, permeated with looking forward to the Messiah, the Christ. Be fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.¹ We rejoice in hope of the glory of God.² We rejoice in tribulations.³ Rejoicing in hope.⁴ Rejoice with those that do rejoice.⁴ Rejoice evermore.⁵ Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, rejoice.⁶ In nothing be anxious, and the peace of God which passeth understanding shall keep your hearts.⁷ I rejoice in the Lord.⁸ The glorying of our hope.⁹ Ye took joyfully the spoiling of your possessions, know-

¹ Romans, xii, 11.

³ *Ibid.*, v, 3.

⁵ 1 Thessalonians, v, 16.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 6, 7.

⁹ Hebrews, iii, 6.

² *Ibid.*, v, 2.

⁴ *Ibid.*, xii, 12, 15.

⁶ Philippians, iv, 4.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 10.

ing that ye have a better and abiding possession.¹ Ye greatly rejoice in your living hope by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead; Whom, having not seen, ye love; in Whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing ye rejoice greatly with joy unspeakable and full of glory.² All these are echoes of the words of Jesus Christ: These things have I spoken unto you that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.³ In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.⁴ Your sorrow shall be turned into joy, and your joy no one taketh away from you.⁵ Ask in My Name and ye shall receive; that your joy may be full.⁶ These things speak I in the world, Father; that these may have My joy made full in themselves.⁷ He who, being weary or depressed, has known the cheer and the renewed courage of good news from a far country, like cold waters to a thirsty soul,⁸ can scarcely fail to appreciate what Emotion can contribute to strength. It is in another form the *morale*, of which Napoleon said that it dominates war.

In conclusion, we to-day have grounds, good grounds, for such good cheer. Like St. Paul, we may thank God and take courage, for the brethren come to meet us. If there be, on the one hand, a sorrowful falling off in the numbers which assemble themselves together, in the church buildings, there is on the other abundant indication of spiritual life quickened

¹ Hebrews, x, 34.

³ St. John, xv, 11.

⁵ *Ibid.*, xvi, 20, 22.

⁷ *Ibid.*, xvii, 13.

² 1 St. Peter, i, 3-8.

⁴ *Ibid.*, xvi, 33.

⁶ *Ibid.*, xvi, 24.

⁸ Proverbs, xxv, 25.

and strengthened in those who abide faithful. They who have gone from us were not of us; if they had been, they no doubt would have continued with us.¹ Had not St. Paul's heart been stayed upon God, had he not had root in himself,² the joining of a few poor, uninfluential men would not have meant to him what it did. The same days that are witnessing now the withdrawal of the indifferent are seeing also by marked tokens the intensifying of the missionary spirit in the several bodies of Christians; their drawing together for a common object. Differences are not ignored; but unity in the one Master is recognized and given the first place. Both in men and in money the apparently reduced numbers give larger and increasing offerings of men and of means to the spread of the message of Him.

The canon of the Old Testament draws to its close with the words: They that feared the Lord spake often one to another, and He hearkened and heard.³ Immediately before and after these words themselves, occur allusions to a time of sifting; of separation between those who feared and those who did not. Such periods are recurrent; but they have a special solemnity when they mark the end of an era, as did this. The final charge to the men of that day was to "Remember" the Law of Moses, the message which they had received; and to look for the signs of the coming of the Messiah.⁴ The command to hope is coupled with an assurance of Hope: To those that love My Name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise

¹ 1 St. John, ii, 19.

² St. Matthew, xiii, 21.

³ Malachi, iii, 16.

⁴ *Ibid.*, iv.

with healing on His wings. After that, silence, till the voice of John the Baptist was heard in the wilderness of Judæa.¹ The command was to hope, as well as to fear; to observe commandments and to look forward.

The command to-day is the same. The history of Israel was one of repeated apostasies; of severances, between those who feared and those who did not. Nevertheless, there were always the mystical seven thousand faithful,² and in the end it was of Israel that came Christ, the Hope of humanity, and also of the universe.³ To Israel belonged the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises. Theirs were the fathers, and of them, as concerning the flesh, came Christ, Who is God over all, blessed for ever.⁴ To them, as to us now, were intrusted the oracles of God. What if some of them were without faith? Their want of faith could not make of none effect the faithfulness of God.⁵ His promise of old to the father of all the faithful,⁶ In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed,⁷ stood fast. Of it the Messiah came, and the promise now is that He will return.⁸ This is our Hope.

¹ St. Matthew, iii, 1-3.

² Romans, xi, 4. 1 Kings, xix, 14, 18.

³ Colossians, i, 20.

⁴ Romans, ix, 4, 5.

⁵ Romans, iii, 1-4.

⁶ *Ibid.*, iv, 11, 16-18.

⁷ Genesis, xii, 3; xxii, 18. Acts, iii, 25. Galatians, iii, 8, 9.

⁸ St. Matthew, xvi, 27; xxiv, 3, 27, 29-31. St. Mark, viii, 38; xiii, 26, 27. Acts, i, 11; iii, 20, 21. 1 Thessalonians, ii, 19; iv, 14-18; v, 1-11. 2 Thessalonians, ii, 1-5. Hebrews, ix, 28.

NOTE. In Foot-note (1), page 252, the reference to the prophet

Isaiah assumes of course the validity of the words of Jesus Christ, Search the Scriptures (of the Jews) for they testify of Me. The passage in Isaiah, xlix, applies to the humiliation of the Messiah, to that extremity of dejection upon the Cross, which found expression in the words, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" The words of the prophet throughout the chapter quoted, as elsewhere, are the reply ; and, as to effect upon the Sufferer, they are summed up in His last words, "It is finished," — completed, — fulfilled. The words which follow, "Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit," are a quotation from the same Scriptures (Psalm, xxxi, 5). The Evangelists and St. Paul continually thus use the Old Testament, and we may reasonably believe that in His exposition, after His Resurrection, of the testimony of "all" the Scriptures (St. Luke, xxiv, 25-27; Acts, i, 3), He pointed out the double prophecy of the Resurrection, that neither was the Spirit of the Messiah left in Sheol, nor yet did His Body see corruption (Psalm, xvi, 10), which was used by both St. Peter and St. Paul to convince the Jews.

THE
PRACTICAL IN CHRISTIANITY

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THE PRACTICAL IN CHRISTIANITY

IN this age of ours, there is no expression in common use more familiar to us all than the word "PRACTICAL." Albeit, like most of our word-coinage, the impression has become dulled and the edges worn, by circulation, we all recognize in it an idea, which, though vaguer and more ill-defined than should be attached to any word used to express thought, nevertheless, by its association in our minds, conveys the notion of results attained, by common-sense diligent effort. A "practical" man, we feel, is one who can be depended upon to accomplish the result which he undertakes, because he knows how to do it, and is sure to use his knowledge to advantage. There does, indeed, in the minds of most men, run the attendant idea, that the man who understands, scientifically, the natural laws upon which processes and methods depend, — not only that some are better than others, but *why* they are so, — is not a practical man. The man who handles mechanical or electrical apparatus with competent knowledge of the effects produced, by such and such disposition of the various parts of the whole, is practical. The man who knows why all this is so, who profoundly understands the deep secrets of natural or mechanical science, who not only knows that such a cause produces such an

effect, but knows from the foundation why it does so, we are apt to think is probably not practical.

In the sphere of religion, a like distinction is also drawn in our common thought to-day. The man who leads, more or less, the life of Christian morality — according to the Sermon on the Mount, let us say — is a practical Christian; the man who seeks the same aim, but in order to do so tries to get below the mere surface of the propositions, even though they be those of our Lord himself; the man who would know and understand the deep spiritual realities, without which even the precepts of our Lord — I say it with reverence — become but the letter of a Law, such a man is considered to have passed out of the domain of practical religion. The words “dogma” and “theology” are flung at his head, as at one who lives with useless, unpractical, fancies; as though the formulation of Christian Truth — which is dogma — were other than the laying of the solid foundation on which alone the scheme of Christian morality securely rests; or God — the knowledge of Whom is the aim of theology — were aught less than the well-spring, the fountain head, from which flows all spiritual truth; the stream, in which alone the deep spiritual necessities of our nature can find satisfaction.

“In knowing God,” says the Collect for Peace in our Morning Prayer, repeating the words of Christ Himself,¹ “standeth” — consisteth — “our Eternal Life.” Theology, which seeks so to know to the utmost, needs no other justification. and while un-

¹ St. John, xvii, 3.

doubtedly that knowledge is practical, experimental, in the sense that only he who has drunk when thirsty fully knows the refreshing power of water, yet is it no less true that they who have explored, as far as human mind can, the mysterious regions in which God's revelation of Himself to us is to be found, those who have traced the stream of truth, as far as man may, to its source in the Being of the Eternal Trinity, who have cleared the channel-ways, and brought into their true relations of unity the several rills, into which the River of Living Water that proceeds out of the Throne of God ¹ seems at first sight to be divided, so that they, though many, are seen to be one; such men, knit together in the Church of God, have done a work as practical, and of far more general utility to mankind, than those who simply drink of the waters and know that they do refresh.

It is as one of these last, however, that I dare to speak to you to-night; not as one of those fully instructed as man can be in the deep things of God, but as one who believes he knows, from long personal experience, the power of God and his own weakness; one who, to recur to my last simile, has drunk and has been refreshed. "Taste and see," says the Psalmist, "how gracious the Lord is. Blessed is the man that trusteth in Him." ² It is on this practical side of religion, as one who has tried God these thirty years and more, that I see any right in me to speak. "Hearken, ye that fear God," says another Psalm, "and I will tell you what He hath done for

¹ Revelation, xxii, 1, 2.

² Psalm, xxxiv, 8. Psalter.

my soul.”¹ That is experience; and, on the side commonly called practical, there is no help that one man can extend to another more real, or more modest. They are not the things that I have done, nor yet the things that I have felt; but the things which I have found, as I believe, to be done for me and in me.

And as I say in every place where I dare to speak at all, let not the ground on which I stand be for a moment misunderstood. Let no man be misled as to what I believe, concerning Him, of whom the dearest thought to me is that He is my *Strength*, — and my Redeemer.² I know naught of Christian Life, except as ever dependent upon, and issuing, as a stream does from its source, from the Life of the Holy Trinity — the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost — from the One who is Three. Nor do I know aught of Christian experience, except as deriving from, and ever connected with, the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ; except as united to Him by the sacramental bonds of Baptism and Communion, so that His Life, — in no figure, but in truth and in power, — is the Christian’s Life; His Strength, the Christian’s Strength. To aim at a Christian life, disunited from Christ’s Person, separated from the Sacraments, would be to me as practical, as to attempt to live apart from air and food; as practical as hoping to keep the stream full while damming the channel which leads from the source thereof; as practical as to try to drive an engine, where there was no communication between

¹ Psalm, lxvi, 14. Psalter.

² Psalm, xix, 15. *Ibid.*

boiler and machinery. It is my conception and belief, speaking as a practical Christian, with such measure of intelligence as you may concede to me, that all Christian theology, — knowledge of God, — is bound up in and proceeds from the sacred Being of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and that that knowledge comes to us, and is available for our practical use in daily life, only through the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the glory and the nature of God are revealed to our spiritual intelligence, and the Life of God is transmitted for the sustaining of our spiritual life, which severed from Him dies at once.

And now, my friends, having performed the practical work, as I hope it is, of clearing from our minds the thought of any other foundation for Christian teaching than that of the knowledge of God, as set forth in the historic Creeds, it would still be easy again to lose myself and you, in generalities as to the strength and the redemption which from these truths spring. Nothing is more unpractical than generalities. Having therefore stated the one foundation, I wish to build upon it the definite practical conclusions, the practical working scheme of Christian Life, as it presents itself to me after the experience of over thirty years.

It is easy to accept, in a general way, that God is the source of all our strength, that we can do nothing without God's help, without God's grace, etc. All these are general expressions, familiar to you all, possessing in themselves a great deal of truth and no error; but they fall short of truth in

its fullness, and they have the fault of all general expressions, especially when familiarized, that they cease to convey sharp and definite impression.

That therefore upon which I would seek to fasten your minds this night is that a man's Christian Life, while it does possess its individual existence, does not exist of itself for an instant. It is not something which exists apart, and receives help from outside; as for instance our physical life receives help from food. Our spiritual life holds its existence by a power which is within it, as well as without. That power is not merely sustenance, it is life itself, self-renewing because of God. Our Lord defined His own prerogative of life, as distinguished from that of a creature, in these words: — As the Father hath life in Himself, so gave He to the Son also to have life in Himself.¹ It is not so with us. Our spiritual life depends absolutely upon union with Him, through Whom we have the continual abiding presence within us, in our interior life, of God the Holy Ghost, Whom our Lord in His Ascension sent forth so to abide in us. It so depends, just as the life of a branch depends upon the abiding of the vine's life within it, to use our Lord's simile; and, consequently, forasmuch as life increases not by effort, but by growth, the progress of the Christian in spiritual life results not from efforts, which are his, but from growth, which is not his. The effects of this conception, when realized, upon a man's practice of life, are almost revolutionary; but as I dwell upon this conception, to develop first itself,

¹ St. John, v, 26.

and then some of the consequences which follow from it, it is necessary first to guard against the *mis-*conception, the exaggeration of truth, to which our human intellects are liable, from their proneness to fly from one extreme to the other.

Therefore, when I say that life does not progress by effort, you will not misunderstand me to mean that effort, in its various forms, — prayer, sacraments, discipline of the will, — has no place in the Christian's growth. Our Lord has embodied the thought that I am trying to place before you in a parable, which one only of the Evangelists has transmitted to us. "So is the Kingdom of God" — which He elsewhere tells us is within us — "as if a man should cast seed into the ground; . . . and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear."¹ Here you have, not only in due proportion, but also fully developed, the two factors — man's part and God's part. The man casts the seed into the earth, — an expression which involves by implication all that man does, the preparation of the ground, the planting, the tending, the watering; but who is there that knows not that the growth of the grain is a *life* process, the essential principle of which not only defies man's investigation, but is independent of his power? "Which of you by anxious thought can add one cubit to his stature?"² This parable stands out to me, among the many of the Gospels, because it seems to me to set forth, more compactly and

¹ St. Mark, iv, 26-29.

² St. Matthew, vi, 27.

more exclusively than any other, the secret of Christian life. The hearing of God's word, prayer, the outward act of receiving the sacraments, spiritual effort of every character, — this is man's part, — the casting of the seed and the tending of it; but the growth is not of him. The ripening of the life, the maturing of the Christian character, goes on by itself, not independent of man's *care*, but wholly independent of man's *power*. "Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts." ¹

To know really a truth like this, with that conviction which alone is worthy of the name knowledge, is the result of personal experience; the work, therefore, of years. We all know the difference between hearing a truth from another, accepting it on his word, and that realization which comes from testing it for one's self — from experience, in short. "I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear," said Job to the Almighty, "but now mine eye seeth Thee. Wherefore I abhor *myself*." ² And so it is. We hear, — hear from one or from another, — but though we hear we do not appreciate, until, perhaps after many years, the veil is lifted and we see ourselves and Him. Then the result is ever the same as with Job. The man abhors *himself*. "All our righteousness is as filthy rags," saith one prophet. I suffer the loss of all things, said St. Paul, speaking of his own tireless efforts. I count them but as refuse, if I may win Christ. ³ It is a poor and

¹ Zechariah, iv, 6. Compare, Isaiah, xxx, 15.

² Job, xlii, 5, 6.

³ Philipians, iii, 8.

partial reading of these words to see St. Paul modestly disclaiming merit for his works, great as they were. He tells us elsewhere that not only are his efforts powerless to constitute merit, they are powerless also to maintain the flame of spiritual life. "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live in the faith of the Son of God."¹ Untiring as man's efforts may be, and much as they may conduce to constitute conditions, favorable to life and to growth, the life is not his, never was his; never, thank God, will be his. It was given to him; it is maintained in him. He grows, but he does not make himself. There is no self-made man in the Kingdom of God.

It is the grace of God to advancing years, a grace which, when received, more than compensates the man for the beauty and freshness of youth, that with the lapse of time he thus more and more sees his Maker as He is, and sees himself as *he* is. To know one's own weakness is hard to the yet untried strength of youth; but that knowledge of weakness is, to the aging, only less dear than the proved knowledge of God's strength and faithfulness.

"Let me no more my comfort draw
From my frail hold on Thee;
In this alone rejoice, with awe,
Thy mighty grasp of me."²

Nothing but experience, often sad, more often joyful, can bring this knowledge to the individual; but we all know well that, while nothing teaches

¹ Galatians, ii, 20.

² John Campbell Shairp.

like personal experience, while nothing can take its place, nevertheless the experience of each generation becomes a fresh starting point for the one which succeeds. Each new generation enters upon the heritage of its predecessor's experience; and while the transmitted experience, — the hearing of the ear, — can never equal the personal experience, — the seeing of the eye, — nevertheless the starting point of the new age is, or should be, an advance upon that of the preceding. Those who are of my age, and with whom God has dealt, know that our point of view has advanced beyond that delivered to us. We have more than was bequeathed to us. It is for us to communicate the gain to our successors. It will take time for them to make it their own, but, if they will hear, God will open their eyes; they will know sooner than we did, and so will advance beyond the point which we have reached.

If a generation has made any spiritual advance over its predecessors, has any contribution to leave to its successors, they will not be the work of any one man, but of the many who together make up the full body of result. The interaction of the whole Body of Christ, conscious and unconscious, goes to each separate effort, coloring and modifying. This, then, is my reason for speaking, and these are the things which I have found, the hearing of my ear, and then the seeing of my eye, the work which God has wrought in me. I live, yet not I. So too, as I live, I know; for, although the intellectual satisfaction that I derive from God's word passes all intellectual pleasure known to me, although I

recognize the profound insight, the logical completeness, the constant recurrence of undesigned coincidences, which prove the oneness of the Mind running throughout the Sacred Word; although all this be so, it is not thus that I know. I live, yet not I; I know, yet not I — not of myself. I knew long ago by intellectual acceptance; I know now by a knowledge for which I can give no account; but I know as I never knew of old.

I know, and I tell you. Few may believe. It is my testimony, however; the things that I knew in the past, the things I know now; and some doubtless will believe. But I am not here to talk about myself, but about Him. To those who may believe on my word, it remains to do as the Samaritans did on the saying of their woman: go to Christ, expecting to receive at His hands.¹ And I feel justified in believing that through my generation telling you to expect that which I, at least, did not for a long time apprehend, you will find earlier than I found: you will find that knowledge, and that confidence, the possession of which passeth all understanding, like the Peace of God,² — which indeed it is. “Now we believe,” said the Samaritans, “not because of thy word; but we have seen for ourselves, and know that this is the Christ, the Saviour of the World.”

It was not thus that I can remember that I was taught; and my teaching came from men not faithful only, but capable and learned also. It seems to me the advance not of myself, individually, but of my generation. The Christian life, as presented

¹ St. John, iv, 39-42.

² Philippians, iv, 4-7.

to my intelligence and as I recall, was a life of battling, of hard work, of systematic effort, crowned by the rewards of labor. God forbid that I should ignore that side of it, which the Bible also asserts. It *is* a warfare and a labor. But while good Protestant doctrine of justification by faith and the insufficiency of one's own merits, and of one's own efforts, were kept well to the front, yet after all the battle was first mine, then the Lord's. I was to save my own soul — which by the way is man's first duty, because above all other cares God has charged him to deliver back his own soul, as his own talents, improved, — I was to save my soul, by God's help. There was a hymn in those days, of which two lines ran :

“The work to be performed is *ours*,
The strength is all His own.”

I do not now feel it so. I no longer say, “I will do this, God helping me.” I say only, “I will help God to do this.” The difference is real. Like the springing of the grain, the work — the life — is His. I can but help my little. A man does not work less hard for this thought, but he works with less anxiety, with more confidence; for there can be no doubt of God's success.

But doubtless some one will say: This may all be true; but, practically, how am I to proceed in order to test it? The question is right; my reply is this: Assuming that you are conscious of this or that fault, of this or that defect, first fasten your purpose upon the expectation, not that you shall

overcome, but that it shall disappear, much as in the natural world infirmities at times disappear with advancing growth or returning health. The conception of overcoming is scriptural, as is that of growth; but in practical effect upon our minds, unless balanced by the clear apprehension of the complementary truth which I seek to place before you, it tends to attributing predominance, or at the least exaggerated importance, to one's own efforts; the idea of disappearance associates readily with the conviction that the result has been achieved for you and in you — by the Holy Ghost, in short.

But is there nothing that I must *do*? You are to do what the man does who casts seed into the earth, and tends the ground. You are to do as the Baptist: level the hills, exalt the valleys, make ready the way.¹ You are to supply the conditions essential to the Lord's coming, by prayer, by sacrament, by effort, for these are means which He has ordained; but you are not to fall into the spiritual error of expecting that the doing these things will make you good, that *you* will conquer by their means. It is through Him that loved us that we are more than conquerors.² You are to guard carefully against confounding the conditions with the life itself. The life is God's gift, its continuance and its growth are His gifts — in no wise the result of your actions, be these of the best. Confusion on this point is a spiritual blunder, it is working on wrong lines; and spiritual blunders entail practical disaster just as

¹ Isaiah, xl, 3-5. St. Matthew, iii, 3.

² Romans, viii, 37. I Corinthians, xv, 57.

all blunders do. This blunder also is of the greatest — is fundamental; for it is misdirected faith, and faith is the foundation of Christian life. The man who expects to overcome by his own efforts, though with God's help, trusts — has faith — at least partly in himself. The man who expects that spiritual life, given in baptism, will grow, because God, Who gave life, gives also growth, trusts in God only. He recognizes that, do what he will, life and growth are utterly beyond his power; and thus recognizing, and resting his hopes wholly upon Him Who can give, he is a *practical* Christian, one who resorts most directly to the one means by which the hoped-for result can be attained.

Look, therefore, you who would serve God, to see results wrought in you which you cannot explain. Pray for faith, — which also is God's gift; ¹ faith to believe in God the Holy Ghost, and in the powers of the world to come,² as in living realities, far more real than the air you breathe, and than the sunshine which surrounds you. Do not cease an atom of work, whether it take the form of effort, or of prayer, or of sacraments, or whatever else may tend to *facilitate* growth. Be each one as St. John the Baptist, one who is busy preparing the way of the Lord, making the paths straight, removing every obstacle; but do not confound these preparations with the Lord's own coming. Remember, too, that as God was not in the earthquake or the whirlwind, but in the still small voice,³ so His coming usually is;

¹ Ephesians, ii, 8.

² Hebrews, vi, 4, 5.

³ 1 Kings, xix, 11-13.

— “not with observation.”¹ He will have come and you scarcely know the moment; as when He came in the flesh, a little child, and few regarded. And when He is come, take again for your own the loving words of the Baptist: “He must increase, I must decrease.”² Decrease I must, not because years are coming and natural strength failing, but because more and more He takes the work. “Our sufficiency is from God.”³

Such is my experience which I give to you. Some distant day, perhaps, some one here young may tell a future generation that he was helped along his road — not by me, but by the Spirit of God speaking through me; for unless it be the Spirit that speaks, and not I, these words are vain. Perhaps then he will feel that, having been so helped, he, at the close of his days, was farther on than else he would have been.

In conclusion: Do you remember the words of our Lord: “When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace: but when a Stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, He taketh from him all his armor wherein he trusted, and divideth the spoils.”⁴ Our Lord was speaking of the struggle between Himself and the powers of darkness; but no teaching of Scripture is of mere private interpretation, narrowed to the immediate occasion; and it has seemed to me that the experience of each Christian is much like this, and that the earlier it is learned, the happier the man, or the generation, or

¹ St. Luke, xvii, 20.

³ 2 Corinthians, iii, 5.

² St. John, iii, 30.

⁴ St. Luke, xi, 21, 22.

the race. We begin, perhaps not exactly by trusting in ourselves, but in laying great store — not wholly undeserved — upon the things we ourselves do; upon our prayers, our efforts, our observances of every kind. They are right; they are good; they are incumbent; but the great trouble is that they are ours, rather than His. So we go forth, generation after generation, to the conflict — and many a rattling fall we get. But at last there cometh One stronger than we, and He takes us from all that armor in which we trusted — the armor which has been ours, not His — and divides all that spoil which we may have thought we had gained. Thenceforth there is indeed peace, for the man overcome has ceased from himself, and looks only to Another, Whose power has never failed.



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